



Scottish Police Federation

5 Woodside Place Glasgow G3 7QF

JCC Circular 20 of 2017

Ref: CS/LS

15 May 2017

Attachments: Corp Plan & AB Plan

Dear Colleague

Scottish Courts & Tribunals Service 3-year Corporate Plan 2017-20 and Annual Business Plan 2017-18

I refer to the above and attach herewith, the Scottish Courts & Tribunals Service Corporate Plan 2017-2020 and their Annual Business Plan 2017-2018 for your information.

In addition to the attached versions, the documents are also available online at <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/reports-data>.

Whilst this circular is primarily for your information only, any comments or observations you may have on its content should be sent to me no later than 10 days after its date of publication.

Yours sincerely

Calum Steele
General Secretary



Scottish Courts
and Tribunals Service



Business Plan

2017-18

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Foreword

Eric McQueen
Chief Executive

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

I am delighted to introduce this business plan which sets out our key activities and the environment in which we will be working in 2017-18. Our plan builds on the significant achievements of the last few years that include the successful merger of the Scottish Court Service with the Scottish Tribunals Service, the delivery of significant changes to civil court procedure, and considerable infrastructure improvements that will prepare us well to deliver better and digitised services in the future.

In reaching this point we have demonstrated the commitment, expertise and professionalism required to deliver our purpose of supporting justice. And we continue looking forward: implementing the most comprehensive reform to our justice system for over a century. This change is necessary, both to improve the service we provide to the users of Scotland's courts and tribunals and to ensure we work hard to meet the expectations of a 21st century public. All this we must do in a constrained financial environment, operating as efficiently as we can to make best use of the resources made available to us.

We are entering the first year of our 2017-20 Corporate Planning period during which we will deliver an ambitious and challenging agenda, building on the reforms and improvements of the past few years. We continue to align our activity under a number of strategic priorities, which are set out in our new Corporate Plan. These are:

- A well supported judiciary
- Satisfied courts and tribunals users
- Skilled and motivated people
- A well-managed estate
- Efficiency and best value
- Digital innovation
- Purposeful collaboration with justice bodies

These priorities will allow us to continue delivering a high-quality service, which is verified independently through improved results in our [2016 Customer Service Excellence](#) assessment and the highest ever positive scores in our independent customer satisfaction survey.

The importance of working collaboratively with the Scottish Government and justice partners has never been greater. This year will see initial work on the development of a new, purpose-built justice centre in Inverness, alongside detailed consideration and development of proposals to significantly modernise the operation of criminal trials. We will continue to support the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system – working through the Justice Board for Scotland.

Our people are at the heart of all we do and our continuing success depends on their skills, commitment, professionalism and enthusiasm. We will continue investing in their future, and having developed our new People Strategy will use that to ensure we are giving our people the opportunity to develop their skills and build careers in an open, positive and collaborative working environment.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Who we are

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) is a non-ministerial department established by the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. Its statutory function is to provide administrative support to the Scottish courts, devolved tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian. The SCTS has a presence in communities across Scotland, with court and tribunal business conducted daily across the country. We operate from some 51 distinct locations across Scotland, together with an additional 15 remote video witness sites and administrative centres. In addition to these sites, tribunals make use of some 70 further venues across Scotland for hearings.

In addition to administering Scotland’s courts and tribunals SCTS supports the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) and Accountant of Court. The OPG provides guidance and undertakes investigations to protect vulnerable people under the terms of the Adults with Incapacity Act 2000. The Public Guardian is also the Accountant of Court. SCTS also provides the staff and administrative support to:

- the Scottish Civil Justice Council, which drafts rules of procedure for the civil courts and advises the Lord President on the development of the civil justice system;
- the Scottish Sentencing Council, which is responsible for preparing sentencing guidelines, publishing guideline judgments and information about sentences imposed by the courts in Scotland.

The purpose of the SCTS is **supporting justice**. We fulfil that purpose by providing the people, buildings and services needed to support the judiciary, courts, devolved tribunals and the OPG. This Business Plan covers the 2017-18 financial year. It aligns with our new Corporate Plan 2017-20 which sets out our strategic vision and priorities over the 3-year period from 2017-18 to 2020-21. For each year of the Corporate Plan, SCTS prepares a Business Plan. This plan explains the environment within which SCTS will be operating and sets out the main outcomes we aim to deliver in 2017-18. In terms of performance reporting against our priorities, published on our website is the [SCTS Board Scorecard](#) updated quarterly, measuring us against our key performance indicators, our [Annual Reports and Accounts](#) and annually we publish our [SCTS Business Plan Delivery Report](#).

Our **vision** is to **build a stronger Courts and Tribunals Service** – focused on providing access to justice, maximising the benefits of technology, and improving the service we provide to all users. In support of our strategic priorities and objectives individual SCTS business units prepare their own plans setting out their more detailed priorities. All the work we do is underpinned by our core **values** of **respect, service and excellence**:

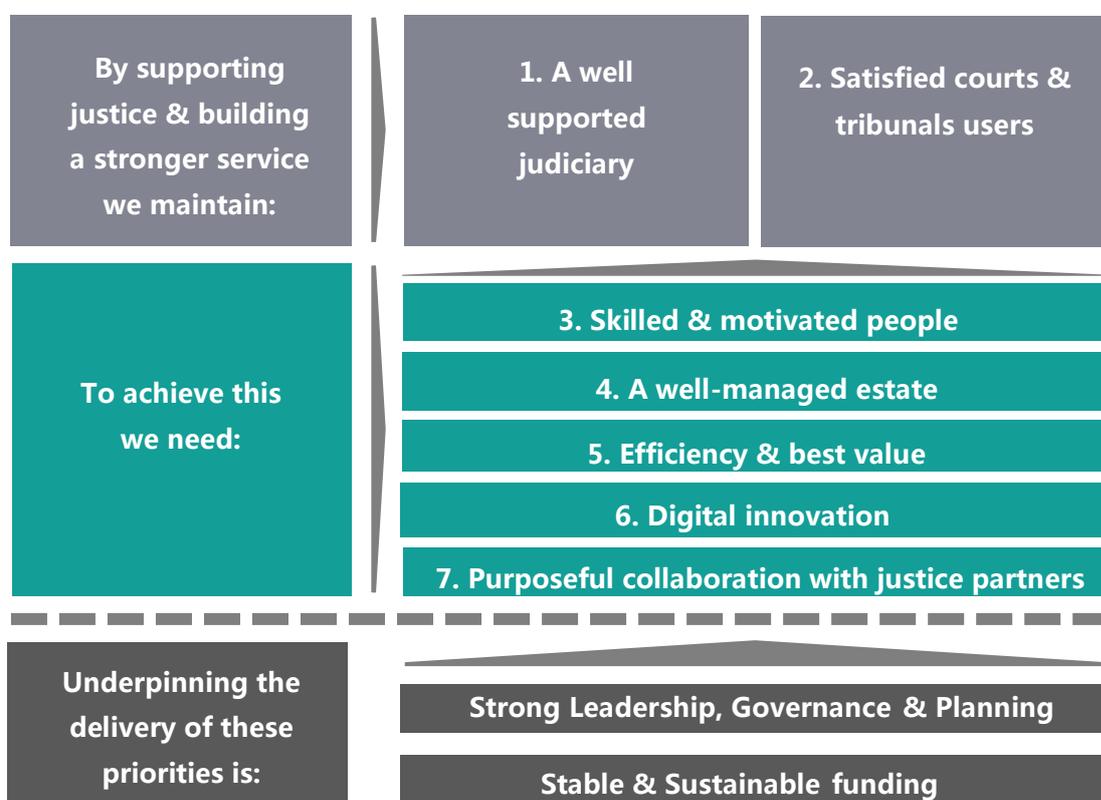


Our Operating Environment

The scale and pace of change and reform across the justice system remains significant. Work such as that being led by SCTS on the Evidence and Procedure Review and the establishment of the First and Upper Tier Tribunals for Scotland will continue to improve the quality and breadth of services provided by courts and tribunals to people across Scotland who use them. The significant reforms to both civil and criminal justice over recent years will continue throughout this year and planning is under way for the devolution of reserved tribunals, as proposed by the Smith Commission, that will see the administration of significant new jurisdictions come under the control of SCTS in the coming 2-3 years. Our operating environment will remain dynamic – with further significant change possible due to the impact of wider changes such as those emerging through the Brexit process.

To be successful in this environment the SCTS maintains a clear strategy and is committed to working in partnership. Our **strategy map** illustrates how our purpose and vision are translated into seven strategic priorities – key areas on which we will focus

SCTS Strategy Map



In order to deliver successfully on these priorities the way in which we approach our business is critical. While independent we work in **collaboration** with the Scottish Government, the Justice Board, local justice boards and a broad range of justice partners. The [Justice Strategy for Scotland](#) provides a common focus for all agencies involved in the delivery of criminal and civil justice and our work supports the delivery of its outcomes and goals (which are summarised at [Annex A](#)).

Policy and Legislative Environment

The level of policy and legislative change faced by Scotland’s justice system remains high – and is focused on improving the experience of all those who use it. The significant legislative programme supporting civil court reform has now been largely delivered, but work will continue to ensure that we realise the benefits that those changes make possible.

Click [here](#) for a diagram summarising the approach of the Strategy for Justice in Scotland at Annex A

Structural change in the administration of Scotland’s tribunals will feature heavily in our work, as the transfer of devolved tribunals into the new Chamber structure gathers pace and proposals for the future devolution of tribunals currently reserved to the UK Government are developed.

Further reforms to improve the experience of children, victims and witnesses interacting with Scotland’s courts and tribunals will be a priority over this and the coming years – and the desire to ensure that the system operates as effectively as possible, whilst managing within tight budgets, will drive further process improvements and reforms aimed at reducing “churn” in the system. All this work will be taken forward against the backdrop of Brexit which will lead to a number of changes in the operation of Scotland’s justice system, some of which are already clear, whilst others will depend on the nature of the settlement reached between the UK and the EU. The main policy developments we anticipate having an impact on our work over 2017-18 are summarised below.

Criminal Justice

During 2017-18 the provisions of the **Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016**, designed to enable and promote more effective management of sheriff and jury cases, will be implemented fully. A number of improvements to the way in which solemn business is managed have already been achieved through the introduction of the [Lord Justice Clerk’s Practice Note](#) requiring both the Crown and defence to engage early to encourage identification and resolution of issues. These will be consolidated by the legislation, requiring written records to be produced in advance of first diet and establishing new time limits for raising indictments.

The Scottish Government is introducing further measures intended to increase the detection and, ultimately, reduce the incidence of, domestic abuse – with the **Domestic Abuse Bill** proposed for 2017-18 that will create new offences. **The Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016** includes, amongst other things, provisions setting out a domestic abuse aggravator and a new offence for the non-consensual sharing of private and intimate images. These provisions are expected to come into force in autumn 2017. We will ensure that the courts are ready to manage these cases effectively – maintaining an 8-10 week average waiting period between the case first calling and the trial diet in cases involving allegations of domestic abuse.

Civil Justice

With the completion of the structural elements of civil court reform we intend, in the course of this year, to review the operation, rules and processes of the newly established **Sheriff Appeal Court and National Personal Injury Court**. The establishment of new courts such as these is not a common occurrence in Scotland’s justice system and it is prudent to evaluate their operation to date, ensuring that they deliver the full benefits envisaged by the Civil Courts Review whilst taking advantage of new technology where possible.

2016 saw the go-live of our new **Integrated Case Management System (ICMS)** in the Sheriff Court and the introduction of civil simple procedure. These significant changes will make it easier for lower value civil actions to be raised and managed, whilst providing more efficient case management processes and data. They also pave the way for simple procedure cases to be submitted and managed via an online portal – civil online – a first for the court system in Scotland. The introduction of a new system on this scale has been a significant undertaking, with implementation in the Court of Session and the introduction of civil online delayed until 2017, to ensure they will operate effectively. Roll-out has presented a number of challenges which have been addressed through the delivery of regular system updates and enhancements to ensure it meets the user needs and that its full benefits can be realised over time.

ICMS provides a flexible platform which can be refined and reconfigured, allowing it to remain effective as court rules and practices change and as we move towards a greater level of digital case management and evidence presentation. Over the course of the coming year we will continue to build the functionality of the system and explore the steps we need to take to ensure that ICMS supports the move towards digital management of cases.

To ensure that lessons are learned from the initial phase of its roll-out a full evaluation will be conducted – and a “road-map” setting out proposals for development will be produced to ensure these are well-managed, sequenced and kept under review. The case management platform introduced through ICMS is capable of being developed to support a broad range of SCTS business areas. Over the course of the coming year the roll-out across civil business will continue, extending the system to include the Court of Session. We will also complete the discovery phase for a new case management system to support the growing workload faced by the Office of the Public Guardian, building on the ICMS platform and the experience we have gained from the initial roll-out.

The **Succession (Scotland) Act 2016** came into force towards the end of 2016 and was the first significant amendment to Scots succession law in over half a century, paving the way for more significant reform. Proposals to further modernise both succession law and practice are expected in 2017-18 on matters such as the rights of cohabitants, protection from disinheritance and the rules for distribution of intestate estates. SCTS will engage in the development of these proposals as they will have an impact on the commissary work we oversee. We will also work with the Scottish Government as they develop new proposals to improve the operation of the **guardianship** process, ensuring that policymakers have the benefit of our practical experience.

The **Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths (Scotland) Act 2016** is intended to modernise the system of FAIs in line with recommendations made by Lord Cullen. It will make important changes to the provision for enquiry into service personnel dying abroad, in addition to mandatory FAIs for new categories of deaths, including the deaths of children in secure accommodation and deaths under police arrest, regardless of location. It will also place a requirement on individuals or organisations to explain how they have implemented recommendations placed on them by a sheriff after a FAI, or to explain why they have not been implemented. These changes may impact upon the level and operation of FAIs, which are held in courts across Scotland – we will ensure that arrangements are in place to manage the smooth introduction of the new law.

Over the course of the year we will liaise with the Scottish and UK Governments, the Scottish Civil Justice Council and the Scottish Sentencing Council to support the effective development and implementation of primary and secondary legislation impacting across the courts and tribunals in Scotland.

Tribunals Reform

The **Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014** created a new, coherent structure for the leadership and administration of Scotland’s devolved tribunals. Supported by the SCTS and under the leadership of the Lord President and the President of Scottish Tribunals the devolved tribunals will transfer into the new structure on a phased basis. This transfer commenced in December 2016 with the Private Rented Housing Panel and the Homeowners Housing Panel forming the new First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber). In the course of 2017-18 we will support the tribunals’ judiciary as the Tax Tribunal, Additional Support Needs Tribunals and Scottish Charity Appeals Panel transfer into the newly established First-tier and Upper Tribunals for Scotland. Considerable preparation will also be carried out for the transfer of the Mental Health Tribunal in 2018-19.

The **Housing (Scotland) Act 2014** confers functions directly on the Scottish Tribunals in respect of the creation of a new Private Rented Sector jurisdiction and a redress mechanism for Letting Agents. These new jurisdictions will be operational in late 2017 and will become part of the Housing and Property Chamber within the First-tier Tribunal. It is estimated that this will result in an additional caseload of approximately 1,100 cases per year. This is a significant expansion for the Housing jurisdiction, and it is expected that Housing jurisdictions will continue to grow with the introduction of the **Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016** which will see further applications to the First-tier Tribunal from 2018.

The **Smith Commission** proposed that responsibility for the administration of Scottish cases falling to be heard by the majority of tribunals whose functions relate to reserved areas of UK law (including social security, immigration,

employment and tax) should be devolved to Scottish Ministers. Whilst detailed planning on the precise time and form of these transfers is ongoing it is clear that the responsibility for administering tribunal business in relation to these currently “reserved” tribunals will transfer from Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to the SCTS within the next 3-4 years. This is a major undertaking and detailed planning has already commenced. Over the course of this year we will work with the tribunals’ judiciary, the UK and Scottish Governments to agree a funding model, operational model and implementation plan in preparation for the transfer in future years.

The Evidence and Procedure Review

Over the course of the past two years the SCTS has led work to develop propositions to improve the operation of Scotland’s criminal justice system significantly. The Evidence and Procedure Review – a multi-agency collaboration has worked to build consensus around reforms that could be made to the system to ensure it realises the benefits of modern technology. Its propositions are designed to improve the quality of evidence presented in criminal trials whilst improving efficiency, effectiveness and fairness for all those involved in it.

The work of the review has explored two distinct areas – the approach to taking evidence from **child and vulnerable witnesses** and further **reform of the summary justice system**, aimed at redesigning the summary process so that pre-trial procedure largely takes place as part of a digital case management process, with court diets set only upon the conclusion of that process where they are clearly required and parties are ready to proceed. That process will be underpinned by strong judicial oversight of the case management process to bring about more agreement of evidence where possible, and to ensure trials focus only on the matters in dispute.

In the course of this year the propositions made by the review will be developed in collaboration with organisations across the justice system. SCTS will play a leading role in facilitating that development. We will ensure that the review’s propositions can be translated into proposals for reform, and promote discussion on proposals for more fundamental reform in the longer term. We will also take forward work to ensure that children and vulnerable witnesses are able to give evidence in a way that maximises its quality and minimises their potential for re-traumatisation, supporting the introduction of a **High Court Practice Note** on the taking of evidence by a Commissioner, designed to improve quality and consistency. More information on the propositions of the Evidence and Procedure Review can be accessed at its most recent **report**, which proposes a potential new model for summary criminal court procedure.

The impact of UK exit from the European Union

The most significant political event to occur during the last planning period was the decision that the United Kingdom should negotiate its exit from the European Union. Whilst formal negotiations are yet to commence at the time of writing the SCTS has already conducted an assessment of the impact that “Brexit” may have on its operation.

The precise impact of Brexit will depend largely on the settlement negotiated between the UK government and the remaining EU states, but there are a number of areas on which SCTS will need to engage and potentially change its procedures, to ensure that the administration of justice remains effective throughout the negotiation process and beyond. These may include issues relating to jurisdiction in child and family law cases with a cross-border dimension, jurisdiction rules in civil and commercial cases and reciprocal rules on the enforcement of court judgments in civil cases.

In relation to criminal business the Brexit negotiations may impact on provisions allowing for the exchange of information on previous convictions, the operation of the European Arrest Warrant and procedures relating to the freezing or confiscation of criminal property across EU states. Existing or new legislation may be challenged in the courts as the process unfolds, rules of court may require amendment to reflect wider changes and, in our position as a large scale public body, we may need to revise our processes to reflect changes in employment law, procurement law or accounting regulations.

We will continue to develop our approach to managing the consequences of Brexit as the negotiations process and are discussing how best to respond to system-wide impacts as part of a working group of justice partners set up under the Justice Board for Scotland.

Financial Environment

The Scottish Government’s budget for the SCTS has been set at £105.6m for 2017-18. In a challenging financial environment it is essential that we continue to deliver high quality services whilst promoting system-wide reform to ensure that Scotland’s courts and tribunals continue to meet the expectations of the public within the resources available.

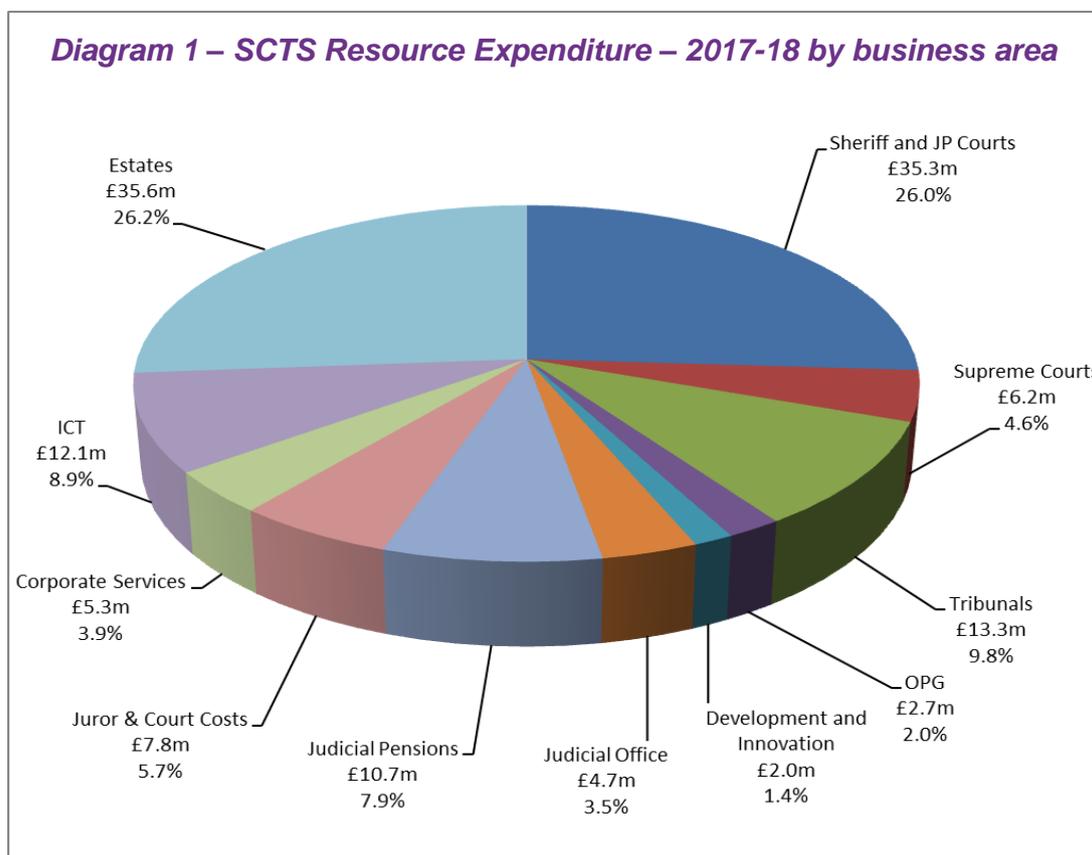
Further detail on the 2017-18 financial plan is provided at [Annex B](#) (p22-23)

In recognition of the fact that significant ongoing reforms are underway, particularly in relation to the transfer of tribunal business to the SCTS, a number of in-year funding transfers have been agreed with the Scottish Government. Over the course of 2017-18 these will supplement the baseline budget by an additional £4.4m (as detailed at annex B) giving a total budget for 2017-18 of £109.9m. This budget meets the majority of the annual running costs with the balance (£43.3m) being met from other sources of income (detailed on page 10).

Where do we invest our resources?

Diagram 1 below shows where the SCTS allocates its **resource by business area**. Some 87% of the total budget is invested directly in supporting front line operations, including the cost of maintaining a diverse and historical estate which accounts for 26% of funding. SCTS continues to invest in digitising the service with some 9% of available funds targeted on strengthening ICT provision to improve front line services.

The financial plan detailed at [Annex B](#) (pages 22-23) illustrates that revenue expenditure for 2017-18 is budgeted at £121.1m, inclusive of a revenue reserve of £0.3m held to provide flexibility for emerging needs. The major cost drivers in line with a national service organisation are staff, accommodation and estates management which account for over 75% of expenditure. Capital funding for 2017-18 is set at £14.7m which includes £7m provided specifically to progress development of the Inverness Justice Centre with further investment across our buildings to maintain an effective and safe estate required of a modern public service.



As in previous years, we will strengthen our ICT infrastructure, most notably through continued investment in our court room technology and increasing our cyber security and resilience. We will continue to invest in digital innovation, including further development of the Integrated Case Management System to deliver increased efficiency and improved service levels for all users.

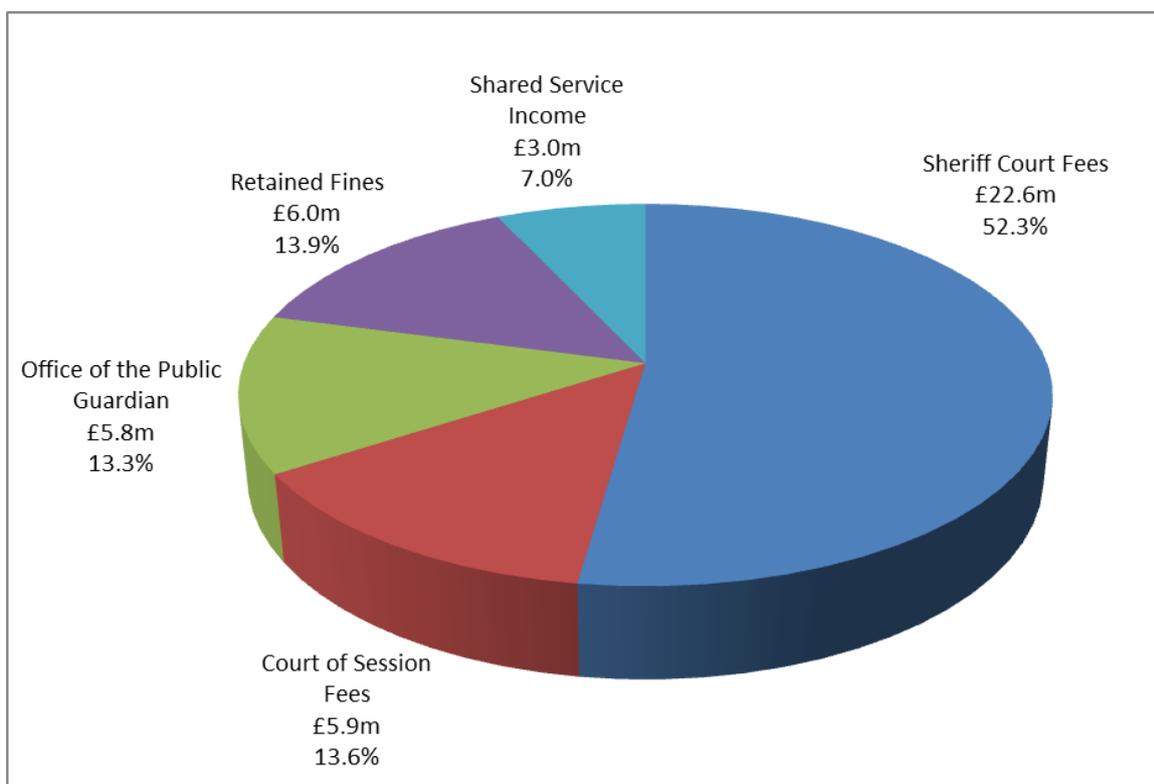
Income

Income for 2017-18 is projected to be £43.3m. Some 79% (£34.3m) of that projection is derived from fees. At £22.6m, the majority of these come through Sheriff Court fees. Income levels for both Sheriff Court and Court of Session fees are expected to increase in 2017-18 due to the November 2016 Fees Order and a continuation of 2016-17 activity levels. Continued growth in the registration of powers of attorney has led to increased income being collected by the Office of the Public Guardian. This is projected to continue and SCTS is investing in staff and systems to meet these ongoing demands.

We will conduct a comprehensive fee review in the first half of this year, in order to inform and support the development of the 2018 fees order that will be promoted by the Scottish Government

Income from retained fines accounts for 14% of the SCTS income and is projected to be £6m in 2017-18. This is a reduction from 2016-17 due to ongoing impact of the introduction of Police Recorded Warnings which has reduced the amount of fines collected and retained. The SCTS also provides accommodation and associated services to a number of public bodies, notably the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, attracting income of £3m.

Diagram 2 – SCTS Income – Projected Levels 2017-18 (total income £43.3m)



Tables summarising the financial allocation for 2017-18, broken down by both service area and cost category, can be found at [Annex B](#).

Business volumes

Levels of business across Scotland’s courts and tribunals remain high. Summary criminal business continues to represent the highest caseload volume with over 115,000 summary complaints forecast to be registered in 2016-17.

Sustained action has been taken by SCTS and other justice partners to tackle increased waiting periods that were caused by a surge in business levels over the past three years. This action has ensured that waiting periods are now within the timescales considered to be optimal in the majority of Scotland’s courts, with domestic abuse cases being heard within the new expedited target of 10 weeks.

*Annex C provides summaries of key business volumes for 2014-15 & 2015-16. It also provides a forecast for 2016-17 and a projection for 2017-18.
(Pages 24-26)*

Whilst the number of indictments registered in the High Court has reduced over the past year both the proportion and the absolute number of cases proceeding to trial has increased. The complexity and length of trials being heard has also been increasing in recent years, resulting in a commensurate increase in the workload of the court in spite of the declining level of indictments registered.

There has been a modest reduction in the level of solemn business heard across the Sheriff Courts in 2016-17 compared with the two previous years and levels of summary complaints registered in the Sheriff Courts remained broadly in line with that of previous years. A more notable reduction can be seen in the number of complaints registered in the Justice of the Peace Court – down some 20% on 2015-16, which reflects changes in prosecution policy, particularly in relation to road traffic offences. The number of trials held is forecast to have declined by a more modest 8% compared with the previous year.

Civil business levels in 2016-17 suggest a small decline in the number of cases registered in compared with 2015-16 but a slight increase in the number of those cases proceeding. 2016-17 also saw the first full year of operation for the Sheriff Appeal Court and the all Scotland Personal Injury Court, which has redistributed a proportion of personal injury cases that would previously have been heard in either the Court of Session or the Sheriff Court.

Office of the Public Guardian

Business levels continue to be high in the Office of the Public Guardian, as increasing numbers of people realise the importance of registering a Power of Attorney in order to ensure their financial affairs can be effectively managed should they be unable to, coupled with the ability to easily register the Power on-line.

Tribunal Business

Levels of business across Scotland’s devolved tribunals are generally on a slight upward trend, with a more notable year on year increase in Mental Health Tribunal receipts and the Lands Tribunal experiencing a 10% increase in cases received in 2016-17. New tribunal jurisdictions in relation to letting agencies and the private rented sector come into force during 2017-18 and initial projections for their business levels have been provided at [Annex C](#).

Financial Penalties

Our 24/7 comprehensive on-line and automated telephone payment options continue to drive the way in which our customers transact with us. In 2016-17 we anticipate over £8.5 million worth of fine collection transactions will have been fully automated. Throughout the reporting year, we will develop new and more efficient links between courts and the DVLA creating a network that allows us to expand our online payment system to a range of road traffic penalties. We will also take forward work that will improve our ability to trace fined offenders by securing the appropriate legislative gateway that enables data sharing arrangements with the Department of Work and Pensions – improving our fines collection rates and the efficiency with which we can trace those who seek to avoid paying their fines.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Business Outcomes for 2017-18

In 2017-18, we will deliver a range of outcomes contributing towards achievement of the ambitious strategic priorities set out in our new Corporate Plan for 2017-20. We will focus on running Scotland's courts, tribunals and OPG effectively on a daily basis; building upon sound infrastructure and process improvements with new innovations, whilst operating within strict budget allocations. As members of the Justice Board we will continue to work with the Scottish Government and other justice organisations, contributing to the development of new approaches and the implementation of major reforms which support delivery of the Strategy for Justice in Scotland, and the Justice Digital Strategy.

Our key business outcomes for 2017-18 are listed on the following pages – grouped under our 7 strategic priorities:

A WELL SUPPORTED JUDICIARY

SATISFIED COURTS & TRIBUNALS USERS

SKILLED & MOTIVATED PEOPLE

A WELL-MANAGED ESTATE

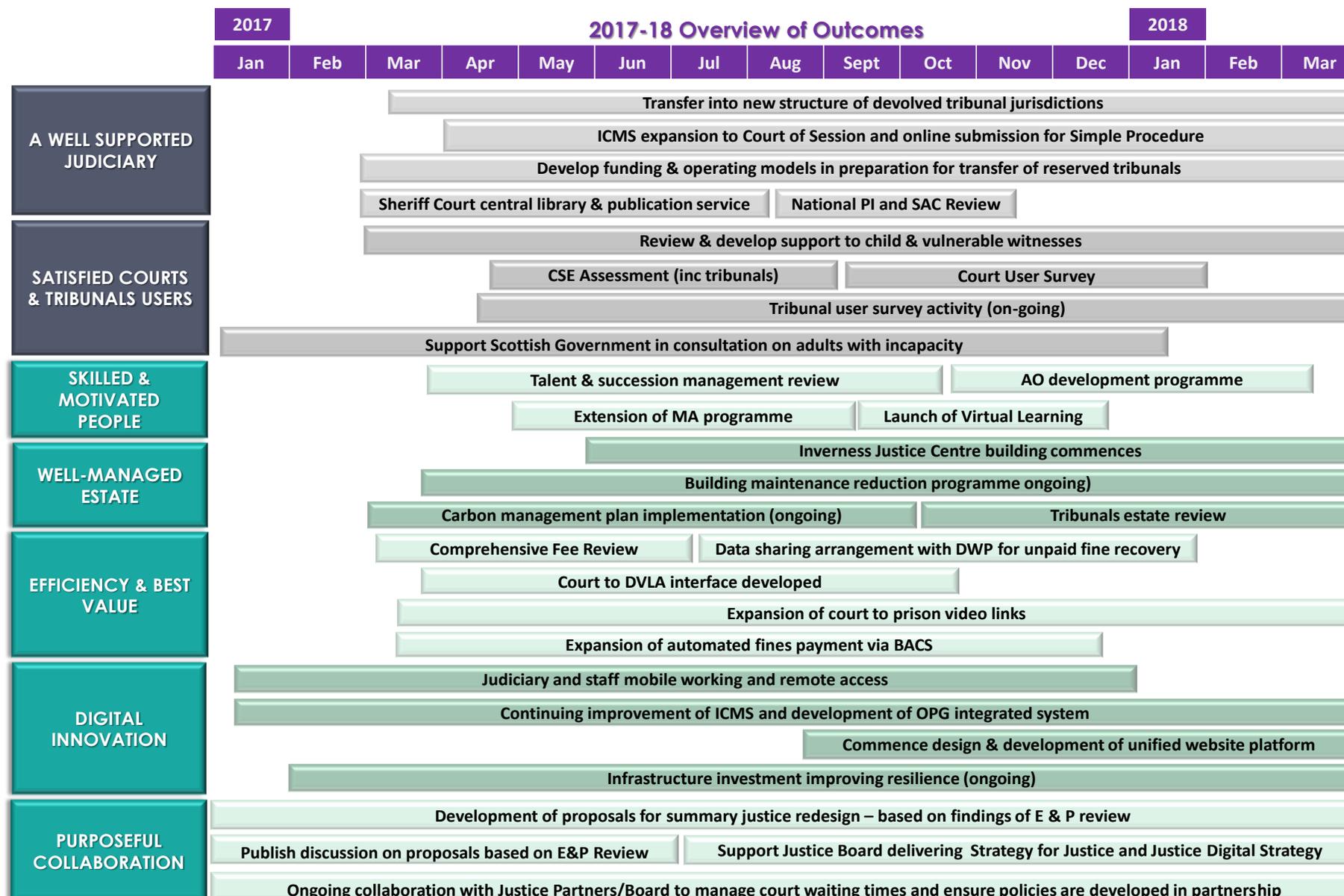
EFFICIENCY & BEST VALUE

DIGITAL INNOVATION

PURPOSEFUL COLLABORATION WITH JUSTICE BODIES

The SCTS Board scrutinises progress against this plan quarterly, alongside consideration of the [Board Scorecard](#) which reports on operational performance against the key indicators listed at [Annex F](#). This plan is supported by more detailed unit plans produced by each business area of the SCTS, which are used by Directors to manage progress in their areas.

The identification and effective management of risk is also necessary to ensure that risks to achieving our priorities are identified, assessed, addressed and reviewed. The key corporate risks identified by the SCTS Board are summarised at [Annex D](#). These were reviewed by the Board in February 2017 and are kept under regular review. Actions to control and mitigate corporate risks are monitored by both the SCTS Executive Team and the SCTS Board's Audit and Risk Committee.



Further information on these outcomes can be found on pages 14-20

A WELL SUPPORTED JUDICIARY STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

We aim to ensure that the right technology, people, systems and processes are in place to assist the judiciary to dispense justice effectively.

The key areas for our focus in 2017-18 will be:

- Delivering effective support to the courts and tribunals judiciary.
- Continuing to ensure that we take account of the views of the judiciary to help us inform improvements in service.
- Developing the future digital civil court through expansion of our new Integrated Case Management System.
- Supporting the tribunal judiciary as further reforms to the tribunal system are considered and developed.

Outcomes	Delivery date
1.1 We will support the judiciary as our new integrated case management system (ICMS) is introduced in the Court of Session and as civil online case submission is launched for simple procedure cases.	Ongoing to March 2018
1.2 We will review the operation, rules and processes of the Sheriff Appeal Court (with its President) and the National Personal Injury Court to ensure these newly established courts operate as effectively as possible and to support further digitisation.	December 2017
1.3 We will support the tribunals' judiciary as the Tax Tribunal, Additional Support Needs Tribunals, Scottish Charity Appeals Panel and Mental Health Tribunal prepare to transfer into the newly established First-tier and Upper Tribunals for Scotland, and as we create the new Private Rented Sector and Letting Agents jurisdictions.	March 2018
1.4 We will work with the tribunals' judiciary, the UK and Scottish Governments to agree a funding model, operational model and implementation plan in preparation for the transfer of administration and judiciary of the reserved tribunals in 2019-20.	March 2018
1.5 We will create a professional library and publication service for the sheriff courts that makes best use of technology to enhance the way we access legal and technical information and to save resources.	October 2017

SATISFIED COURTS & TRIBUNALS USERS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

We will consistently deliver high-quality customer service, inspiring confidence in those who use our services, promoting inclusiveness and developing our understanding of customer needs through ongoing feedback and quality assessment.

The key areas for our focus in 2017-18 will be:

- Continuing to build our understanding of the needs and views of courts, tribunals and OPG service users to inform improvements in service quality.
- Reviewing the significant reforms in service provision for victims and vulnerable witnesses to ensure these are achieving the desired outcomes.
- Building our insight on the needs & views of tribunals users, as these are distinct from court users.
- Using the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard as our principal tool for understanding user needs, driving continuous improvement and independently validating our service.

Outcomes	Delivery date
2.1 We will successfully integrate tribunals into the SCTS CSE accreditation package and use the insights gained from CSE to drive continuous improvement across all business areas.	September 2017
2.2 We will undertake our biennial Court Users' Survey, and use qualitative assessment and feedback from tribunals' users, to ensure we continue to develop understanding of all our customer needs and expectations.	December 2017
2.3 We will support the introduction of the High Court Practice Note on the taking of evidence by a Commissioner, designed to improve the quality and consistency in which the evidence of child and vulnerable witnesses is taken, by providing the technical, practical and administrative resources required.	August 2017
2.4 We will work with the Scottish Government as it develops options for reforming the guardianship process as part of its review of Adults with Incapacity legislation, ensuring that any proposals are informed by practical experience.	November 2017

SKILLED & MOTIVATED PEOPLE STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

We will maintain a skilled and motivated workforce supporting the judiciary and providing excellent customer service across the tribunals, courts and Office of the Public Guardian (OPG).

The key areas for our focus in 2017-18 will be:

- Continuing to develop the capability of our managers and people at strategic and operational level
- Building our capacity through developing innovative learning technologies and skills development.
- Ensuring that in delivering on our People Strategy we are inclusive of the views and perspectives from across the organisation harnessing the ability and dedication of our people.

Outcomes	Delivery date
3.1 We will launch a review of our talent and succession management processes in line with our People Strategy to ensure those with the skills, capability and ambition are supported to develop into appropriate roles across the organisation.	October 2017
3.2 We will extend our use of modern apprentices into further business areas to ensure that new skills and perspectives continue to be brought into the organisation.	September 2017
3.3 We will launch a virtual learning environment to improve our capacity to deliver organisational training that provides greater variety and choice, building the right balance of blended learning.	December 2017
3.4 We will deliver a development programme in the courts for administrative officers and conduct a staff skills audit across operational business units, enhancing technical knowledge and skills whilst building capability.	March 2018

A WELL-MANAGED ESTATE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

We will develop and maintain our built and digital infrastructure to provide high-quality, safe, secure and sustainable environment for everyone using our services.

The key areas for our focus in 2017-18 will be:

- Implementing our new estates strategy and carbon management plan to deliver facilities that are optimal for the 21st century.
- Working in partnership on the development of the justice centre in Inverness to ensure we deliver the optimal facility, meeting the needs of all who will use it.
- Balancing estates investment with maintenance and access requirements across the estate, against the backdrop of a constrained budget.
- Exploring the potential for further joint working and shared services with justice partners.

Outcomes	Delivery date
4.1 We will commence construction of the new justice centre facility in Inverness, ensuring that the building meets the needs and expectations of service users and justice partners.	September 2018
4.2 We will make carbon reduction efficiencies in line with revised targets, upholding our position as leaders through example in the Scottish public sector.	March 2018
4.3 We will review the Tribunals estate ensuring we provide the right accommodation for operations in Glasgow and Edinburgh - enhancing access to services for tribunal users and providing value for money.	December 2017
4.4 We will continue to address backlog maintenance across the estate, targeting investment where it is most needed and seeking to reduce the overall backlog within available funding.	Ongoing to March 2018

EFFICIENCY & BEST VALUE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

We will secure a stable financial base that allows us to continually improve our services and be sustainable in the long term. We will keep our processes under review to make sure that we deliver business in an effective, reliable and economical way.

The key areas for our focus in 2017-18 will be:

- Ensuring that clear and efficient business processes are in place, meeting the needs of all service users.
- Ensuring that progress of business is reliable, economical and avoids inappropriate delays.
- Expanding operation of our services in other electronic formats to make it easier to interact with us.
- Review the costs and fees we charge for our services to inform future fee levels.

Outcomes	Delivery date
5.1 We will secure legislative changes that enable data sharing arrangements with DWP, improving our ability to trace and recover unpaid fines.	January 2018
5.2 We will develop an interface between our systems and those of the DVLA, allowing online payment of a range of road traffic penalties.	October 2017
5.3 We will explore with justice partners the potential to increasingly use video conferencing in the management of remote custodies, providing links in 8 additional locations across the courts' estate.	March 2018
5.4 We will undertake a comprehensive Fee Review to support consultation and development of the 2018 Scottish Government Fees Order.	June 2017
5.5 We will extend the use of automated payment facilities to include payments to jurors, recipients of criminal compensation, and conjoined arrestment orders – improving the service to those receiving payments and reducing transaction costs.	December 2017

DIGITAL INNOVATION STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

We will place digital innovation at the centre of what we do, making sure that we maximise the opportunities afforded by technology to improve processes, provide easy access to information, minimise physical appearance and support quicker outcomes.

The key areas for our focus in 2017-18 will be:

- Ensuring that our systems are ready to support greater use of online transactions, video conferencing and digital evidence presentation – so that the amount of paper in the courtroom reduces.
- Continuing to consolidate our ICT on secure and flexible technology platforms.
- Providing courtrooms with a consistently high standard of ICT to ensure current and future systems can be used to best effect.

Outcomes	Delivery date
6.1 We will provide the judiciary and staff with the technology to support secure mobile working and remote access, developing specific solutions for tribunals' judiciary and justices of the peace.	December 2017
6.2 We will continue investing in our IT infrastructure, ensuring that it can accommodate future developments – and that our systems are efficient, resilient and backed-up by robust recovery management.	March 2018
6.3 We will continue to develop our integrated case management system (ICMS) to support the move towards greater levels of digital case management and evidence presentation, prioritising the Sheriff Appeal Court and Court of Session commercial actions.	On-going to March 2018
6.4 We will complete the discovery phase of a new case management system for the Office of the Public Guardian – so that it can be developed using the ICMS platform.	March 2018
6.5 We will specify and procure a framework contract for the development, support and hosting of a unified intranet and website platform, to enable improved access to our information and services.	December 2017

PURPOSEFUL COLLABORATION WITH JUSTICE BODIES

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7

We will work with justice bodies to deliver significant change and improvement to Scotland's justice system – through collaboration, communication and reform.

The key areas for our focus in 2017-18 will be:

- Contributing to effective policy development and innovation – ensuring that the future design and operation of court and tribunal systems is efficient, effective and meets user needs.
- Continuing to actively support collaborative reform and improvement of courts and tribunals through the Evidence and Procedure programme.
- Exploring the potential benefits of greater joint working in particular services and at particular locations.

Outcomes	Delivery date
7.1 We will lead the justice-wide development of proposals under the Evidence and Procedure Review designed to transform the summary criminal justice system into a digitally-enabled, efficient and modern system that delivers effective justice for all.	Ongoing to March 2018
7.2 We will publish and promote discussion on proposals to ensure that children and vulnerable witnesses can give evidence in a way that maximises the quality of their evidence and minimises their potential for re-traumatisation – working with partners to implement reform.	June 2017
7.3 We will support the work of the Justice Board for Scotland in delivering the Strategy for Justice by sharing our plans, activities and best practice to ensure a co-ordinated approach to investment and improvement across the justice community.	Ongoing to March 2018
7.4 We will continue to effectively manage criminal business levels ensuring that an optimum period between first calling and trial diet of sixteen weeks is maintained in summary business; 8-10 weeks in domestic abuse cases; and by supporting the judiciary in the implementation of improvements to solemn procedure introduced by the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.	Ongoing

Annex A - Strategy for Justice

PURPOSE					
To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.					
VISION					
Our vision is of a justice system that contributes positively to a flourishing Scotland, helping to create an inclusive and respectful society in which all people and communities live in safety and security, individual and collective rights are supported and disputes are resolved fairly and swiftly					
NATIONAL OUTCOMES		We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others		Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	
We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger					
JUSTICE OUTCOMES		We experience low levels of crime		We experience low levels of fear, alarm and distress	
		We are at a low risk of unintentional harm		Our people and communities support and respect each other, exercising both their rights and responsibilities	
We have high levels of confidence in justice institutions and processes		Our public services are fair and accessible		Our institutions and processes are effective and efficient	
				Our public services respect the rights and voices of users	
PRIORITIES					
Reducing crime, particularly violent and serious organised crime		Reducing reoffending		Tackling hate crime and sectarianism	
				Enhancing efficiency	
				Supporting victims and witnesses	
				Widening access to justice and advancing law reform	
Reducing the damaging impacts of drug and alcohol problems		Preventing offending by young people		Reducing the harm from fires and other emergencies	
				Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime	
				Strengthening community engagement and resilience	
				Transforming civil and administrative justice	
APPROACH					
Building safer communities		Getting it right for every child		Whole system approach	
				Making justice work	
				Victims and witnesses legislation	
				Reducing reoffending II	
Road to recovery		Equally well		Early years framework	
				Achieving our potential	
				Reassuring the public	
				Police and fire reform	

Annex B – Summary Financial Plan

2017-18 - Financial Summary by Cost Category

Cost Category	2017-2018 Budget Bill £000's	In Year Funding	2017-2018 Budget £000's
Revenue			
Pay	50,495	2,149	52,644
Other Staff Costs	2,371	195	2,566
Rent & Rates	10,924	27	10,951
Accommodation	7,621	187	7,808
Building Maintenance	6,187	0	6,187
Judicial Costs	2,561	(112)	2,449
Tribunal Members fees	6,339	1,418	7,758
Office & Other	5,625	195	5,821
Supplies & Services	4,931	56	4,987
Training	310	2	311
Travel	785	56	842
Total Direct Costs	98,150	4,173	102,323
Total Operational Costs	7,719	31	7,750
Judicial Pensions	10,735	0	10,735
Reserve/(Shortfall)	250	0	250
Total Revenue Expenditure	116,855	4,204	121,059
Fees for Civil Cases	(34,289)	0	(34,289)
Rents Receivable	(3,015)	0	(3,015)
Retained Fines	(6,000)	0	(6,000)
Total Receipts	(43,304)	0	(43,304)
Net Revenue Expenditure	73,551	4,204	77,755
Capital			
Estates capital	2,500	50	2,550
ICT Capital	4,000	110	4,110
Inverness Justice Centre	7,000	0	7,000
ICMS Development	1,000	0	1,000
Total Capital Expenditure	14,500	160	14,660
Depreciation	17,507	10	17,517
Total Net Expenditure	105,558	4,374	109,932

Annex B (cont.) – Summary Financial Plan

2017-18 - Financial Summary by Service Area

Service Area	Budgets		
	Revenue £000's	Capital £000's	Total £000's
Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court	33,426		33,426
High Court and Court of Session	6,207		6,207
Tribunal Operations	13,143	160	13,303
Office of the Public Guardian	2,715		2,715
Development and Innovation	1,951		1,951
Judicial Office	4,726		4,726
Part-time Shrieval Fees	1,577		1,577
Judicial Pensions	10,735		10,735
Juror Costs, Medical and Specialist Court Reports	7,750		7,750
ICMS	799	1,000	1,799
Corporate Services	5,330		5,330
Information Communications and Technology	6,340	4,000	10,340
Estates and Property Services	26,108	9,500	35,608
Reserve/(Shortfall)	250		250
Total Direct Costs	121,059	14,660	135,719
Receipts	(43,304)		(43,304)
Depreciation	17,517		17,517
Total Net Expenditure	95,272	14,660	109,932

A commentary on the financial environment and budget can be found at pages 9-10 of this plan

Annex C – Business Volumes and Planning Assumptions

Supreme Courts, Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts, Office of the Public Guardian

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17 (Forecast)	2017-18 (Projection)
High Court				
High Court judge days	3881	3780	3920	3900
Indictments registered	812	748	650	650
Trials Evidence Led	443	403	430	430
Court of Session				
Court of Session judge days	1956	1968	1800	1800
Cases registered	3727	2864	950	950
Proofs proceeding	114	168	120	120
All-Scotland Courts				
Criminal Appeal Court: appeals lodged		407	890	900
Civil Appeal Court: appeals lodged		42	280	300
Personal Injury Court: registrations		1143	3000	3000
Sheriff Courts				
Sheriff Court sitting days	28946	28819	28950	29000
Sheriff Courts: Summary				
Complaints registered	71350	72242	71000	71500
Trials Evidence Led	8912	9425	9050	9000
Sheriff Courts: Solemn				
S&J Indictments registered	6920	6460	6000	6000
S&J Trials Evidence Led	1430	1497	1370	1300
Sheriff Courts: Civil				
Ordinary Cause registered	23628	23212	22900	22000
OC Proofs and Debates proceeding	990	971	1130	900
Summary Cause/Small Claims/Simple Proc reg'd	47977	49008	45210	50000
SC Proofs Proceeding	509	515	520	600
JP Courts				
Complaints registered	66819	54856	41000	39500
Trials Evidence Led	3151	3258	3000	2800
Office of the Public Guardian				
Powers of Attorney registered	55527	55508	55000	60000
Guardianship Orders registered	2500	2678	2500	2500
Access to funds orders registered	351	350	350	350
Intervention orders registered	343	360	340	340

The Sheriff Appeal Court was established in 2015 – the criminal jurisdiction came into effect in Sep 2015 and the civil jurisdiction in Jan 2016.

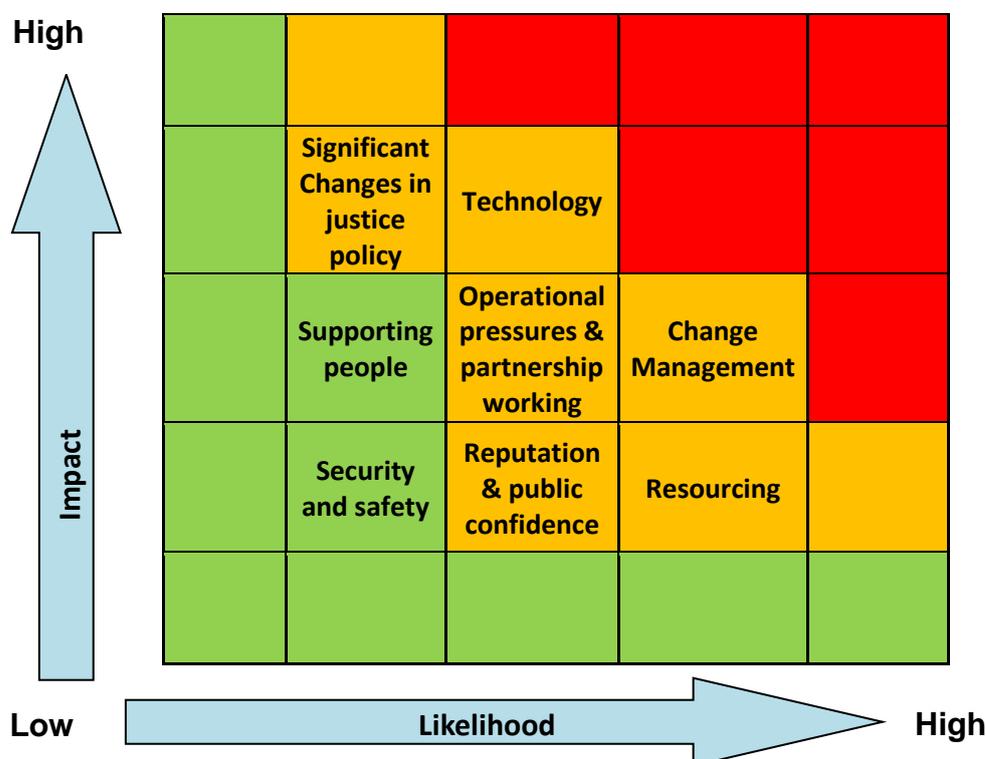
Annex C (cont.) – Business Volumes and Planning Assumptions

TRIBUNALS	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 forecast	2017/18 (Projection)
Additional Support Needs Tribunal				
Receipts	78	68	64	61
Disposals	68	67	54	52
Hearing Days	48	25	21	28
Council Tax Reduction Review Panel				
Receipts	52	92	100	101
Disposals	51	60	100	100
Hearing Days	8	11	14	24
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber)				
Property Factor				
Receipts	189	163	189	186
Disposals	311	171	192	172
Hearing Days	81	75	85	82
Rent & Repairs				
Receipts	331	335	318	328
Disposals	217	384	318	303
Hearing Days	200	192.5	210	200
3rd Party				
Receipts	-	5	50	158
Disposals	-	0	9	72
Hearing Days	-	0.5	20	65
Right of Entry				
Receipts	-	8	27	82
Disposals	-	4	17	54
Hearing Days	-	n/a	Nil	Nil
Letting Agents (new from Dec 17)				
Receipts	-	-	-	40
Disposals	-	-	-	13
Hearing Days	-	-	-	20
Private Tenancies (new from Dec 17)				
Receipts	-	-	-	369
Disposals	-	-	-	123
Hearing Days	-	-	-	185

TRIBUNALS	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 forecast	2017/18 (Projection)
Private Rented Sector (new from Dec 17)				
Receipts	-	-	-	233
Disposals	-	-	-	78
Hearing Days	-	-	-	117
Lands Tribunal for Scotland				
Receipts	194	240	271	300
Disposals	243	367	232	300
Hearing Days	68	93	82	80
Pensions Appeal Tribunals for Scotland				
Receipts	316	222	216	240
Disposals	237	152	249	240
Hearing Days	87	66	78	70
Scottish Charity Appeals Panel				
Receipts	0	0	0	2
Disposals	0	0	0	2
Hearing Days	0	0	0	2
Tax Tribunals for Scotland				
Receipts	-	2	14	40
Disposals	-	2	11	35
Hearing Days	-	0	3	24
Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland				
Receipts	3870	4239	4338	4583
Disposals	3816	4136	4267	4536
Hearing Days	3381	3453	3338	3557
Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland (Excessive Security)				
Receipts	n/a	23	36	54
Disposals	n/a	8	36	54
Hearing Days	n/a	8	21	66

Annex D – Key Strategic Risk Areas & Corporate Risks

Strategic Risk Categories – Identified and Mapped by the SCTS Board



Strategic Risk Category	Corporate Risk(s) monitored by SCTS Board and Audit & Risk Committee
1. Change Management	Scale and pace of change exceeds capacity to deliver Ability to effectively deliver business and/or reform fails due to budget constraint Operational and delivery structures do not adapt to realise full benefits of reform UK exit from the EU impacts on SCTS' ability to deliver core business or reform programme
2. Technology	Loss of Business due to failure of ICT /breach in cyber security arrangements New IT infrastructure and/or systems do not allow full realisation of benefits from planned justice system reform
3. Resourcing	Ability to effectively deliver business and/or reform falls due to budget constraint Failure to maintain right level of skilled and knowledgeable staff to deliver SCTS business UK exit from the EU impacts on SCTS' ability to deliver core business or reform programme
4. Operational Pressures & Partnership Work	Essential business and services compromised due to staff/building shortages Failure of information management controls leading to data loss Loss of business due to failure of ICT Partnership working fails to maximise system efficiency or realise full benefits of reform
5. Supporting People	Failure to maintain right level of skilled and knowledgeable staff to deliver SCTS business Lack of staff engagement
6. Significant Changes in Justice Policy	Scale and pace of change exceeds capacity to deliver New IT infrastructure/systems do not allow full realisation of benefits from planned reform UK exit from the EU impacts on SCTS' ability to deliver core business or reform programme
7. Reputation and Public Confidence	Loss of business due to failure of ICT/cyber security Essential business and services compromised due to staff/building shortages Scale and pace of change exceeds capacity to deliver
8. Security and Safety	Significant health and safety or security breach

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Our Strategic Priorities & Objectives 2017-20

By supporting justice and building a stronger service we maintain:

- A well-supported Judiciary; and
- Satisfied courts and tribunals users.

In order to deliver we need:

- Skilled and motivated people;
- A well-managed estate;
- Efficiency and best value;
- Digital innovation; and
- Purposeful collaboration with justice bodies.

Underpinning the delivery of this we need:

- Strong leadership, governance and planning;
- Stable and sustainable funding.

For each of our seven strategic priorities the SCTS Board has set out the main objectives that the organisation aims to achieve over the 2017-20 Corporate Planning period.

Strategic Priority 1 – A Well Supported Judiciary

We aim to ensure that the right technology, people, systems and processes are in place to assist the judiciary to dispense justice effectively.

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

1.1 We will deliver a modern tribunal chamber structure for Scotland, including the transfer of the administration of reserved tribunals to SCTS and improvements in the systems, processes and operational support provided to the judiciary.

1.2 We will support the Lord President and Sheriffs Principals in delivering an effective structure for the disposal of court business across Scotland, including the continued deployment of summary sheriffs.

1.3 We will provide the staff, resources and tools required to support judicial case management as it increasingly becomes the norm.

1.4 We will deliver a state-of-the-art justice centre in Inverness that will support multi-agency collaboration and develop proposals for a further centre in Fife.

1.5 We will support the judiciary in the adoption of digital processes and further procedural change aimed at improving the justice system, including changes proposed under the Evidence and Procedure Review.

Strategic Priority 2 – Satisfied Courts & Tribunals Users

We will consistently deliver high-quality customer service, inspiring confidence in those who use our services, promoting inclusiveness and developing our understanding of customer needs through ongoing feedback and quality assessment.

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

2.1 We will introduce new procedures that will make it routine for the evidence and examination of children and vulnerable witnesses to be recorded in advance of trial, in an appropriate environment that does not confuse, distress or further traumatise the witness.

2.2 We will continue to seek the views of all those who use our services through quality surveys and feedback to meet diverse user needs, assess the effectiveness of our service and inform further improvement.

2.3 We will use the Customer Service Excellence standard to measure and improve upon the quality of service we deliver.

2.4 We will monitor and improve service standards for victims and witnesses – building on the current standards, customer feedback and the opportunities afforded by new technology.

Strategic Priority 3 – Skilled & Motivated People

We will maintain a skilled and motivated workforce supporting the judiciary and providing excellent customer service across the tribunals, courts and Office of the Public Guardian (OPG).

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

3.1 We will establish a new learning and development framework, transforming the delivery of training, learning and development by using a blended approach that gives access to knowledge and support when and where required.

3.2 We will ensure that our resourcing policy gives us the skills and competencies we require to be successful – using a mixture of secondments, apprenticeships and the development of professional qualifications and standards.

3.3 We will implement our new People Strategy, taking a strategic approach to succession planning, talent management, career progression and lifelong learning.

3.4 We will ensure that we have the right policies, structures and resources in place to maintain a diverse and integrated workforce as our responsibilities expand.

Strategic Priority 4 – A Well-Managed Estate

We will develop and maintain our built infrastructure to provide a high-quality, safe, secure and sustainable environment for everyone using our services.

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

4.1 We will support the justice reform agenda by targeting investment across the courts estate, facilitating the use of technology and collaboration amongst partners to deliver business effectively.

4.2 We will invest in and develop the tribunals' estate, exploring the potential to bring services together and improve facilities for all those who use them.

4.3 We will increase the sustainability of our built estate by continuing to target historic backlog maintenance & meeting the challenging reduction targets set in our Carbon Management Plan.

4.4 We will explore the potential for the development of further justice centres in key population centres across Scotland – to support multi-agency collaboration should further funding become available.

Strategic Priority 5 – Efficiency & Best Value

We will secure a stable financial base that allows us to continually improve our services and be sustainable in the long term. We will keep our processes under review to make sure that we deliver business in an effective, reliable and economical way.

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

5.1 We will work with partners to ensure that Scotland's legal, technical and operational framework ensures that people only attend court in person when there is a clear benefit in doing so.

5.2 We will develop a high-quality web presence providing clear user advice, information and access to new digital services as these are developed.

5.3 We will continue to review internal business processes to maximise efficiency and effectiveness, thereby achieving best value.

5.4 We will review our fee structures to ensure that fees incentivise efficient and effective practice and are matched to the costs of activity.

Strategic Priority 6 – Digital Innovation

We will place digital innovation at the centre of what we do, making sure that we maximise the opportunities afforded by technology to improve processes, provide easy access to information, minimise physical appearance and support quicker outcomes.

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

6.1 We will extend our integrated case management system to other business areas, providing an efficient platform for case management and electronic data interchange.

6.2 We will invest in systems to support effective mobile working and collaboration for the judiciary and staff.

6.3 We will invest in the security and resilience of our networks and systems to underpin our increasing use of digital services and to mitigate the increasing threat of cybercrime.

6.4 We will work with our partners to refresh and develop the SCTS Digital Strategy and collaborate to deliver shared capabilities and common best practices.

Strategic Priority 7 – Purposeful Collaboration with Justice Bodies

We will work with justice bodies to deliver significant change and improvement to Scotland's justice system – through collaboration, communication and reform.

In achieving this we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

7.1 We will, as members of Scotland's Justice Board and its six local criminal justice boards, work in partnership with justice agencies, professional groups and the third sector, to maintain and improve system performance, integrating long-term policy development with practical operational improvements.

7.2 We will work with the UK Government, Scottish Government and justice partners to deliver a smooth transition of the administration of reserved tribunals to the SCTS.

7.3 We will lead the development of reforms to criminal business set out in the Evidence and Procedure Review, introducing a new approach to case management, using digital evidence and online case management to eliminate unnecessary, routine and often repeated hearings in court.

7.4 We will explore the potential to make greater use of online and alternative dispute resolution in civil and administrative cases – avoiding the need for hearings where matters can be settled.

Annex F – Summary of Key Performance Indicators

Performance against the KPI measures is monitored quarterly by the SCTS Board, using its Performance Scorecard published on our website, which assesses a range of measures relating to delivery of our seven Strategic Priorities. These are summarised below.

1. A WELL SUPPORTED JUDICIARY

1a Judicial satisfaction levels (assessment of most recent judicial attitudes survey plus qualitative assessment by SCTS Executive Team).

2. SATISFIED COURTS & TRIBUNALS USERS

2a User satisfaction levels (based on SCTS Court User Survey Data and ratings provided in independent Customer Service Excellence analysis).

2b Percentage of summary criminal cases disposed of within twenty-six weeks (based on official justice system statistics).

3. SKILLED & MOTIVATED PEOPLE

3a Employee engagement levels (indicator based around staff turnover, absence levels and survey data).

3b Delivery of staff development (indicator based around skills assessment tool and index rating).

4. A WELL-MANAGED ESTATE

4a Investment in the Estate (assessment of investment levels to ensure that backlog maintenance is being managed effectively).

5. EFFICIENCY & BEST VALUE

5a Sheriff summary criminal waiting periods (assessment of the length of time between pleading and trial diets, based on court system data).

5b JP summary criminal waiting periods (assessment of the length of time between pleading and trial diets, based on court system data).

5c Summary trials adjourned with no evidence led (proportion of trials called where the substantive business cannot proceed, based on court system data).

5d Court business waiting times (non-summary). An analysis of twelve key waiting indicators across a broad range of court business, assessing whether waiting times in relation to that business remain within optimal levels.

5e Effective Tribunals Operations – an assessment of 14 key administrative targets monitored by Tribunal Operations Directorate, to ensure that tribunals are effectively administered.

5f Managing expenditure (comparison of actual expenditure with profiled expenditure to ensure robust budgeting).

5g Managing income (comparison of actual fines and fees income with profiled income to ensure robust profiling).

5h Programme and Project Delivery (assessment of delivery of business change activity).

6. DIGITAL INNOVATION

6a Proportion of applicable transactions carried out online (measure to assess and drive greater use of online systems, such as online fines payment).

6b IT system availability (% of time that core systems are available for use).

7. PURPOSEFUL COLLABORATION WITH JUSTICE BODIES

7a Assessment of collaboration with other justice bodies and through the Justice Board for Scotland.

SCTS website

<http://www.scotcourttribunals.gov.uk>

SCTS Reports and Data

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/reports-data

SCTS Board

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/the-scottish-court-service-board

Office of the public Guardian

www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk

Scottish Tribunals

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/the-tribunals/about-scottish-tribunals>

Other Courts & Tribunals

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/the-tribunals/other-courts-and-tribunals>

Judicial Office for Scotland

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/judicial-office-for-scotland

Scottish Government

<http://www.gov.scot>

Scottish Civil Justice Council

www.scottishciviljusticecouncil.gov.uk

Scottish Sentencing Council

<https://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk>

Justice Strategy for Scotland

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/09/5924/0>

If you require production of this document in another language or format please contact us at: enquiries@scotcourttribunals.gov.uk

Further Information

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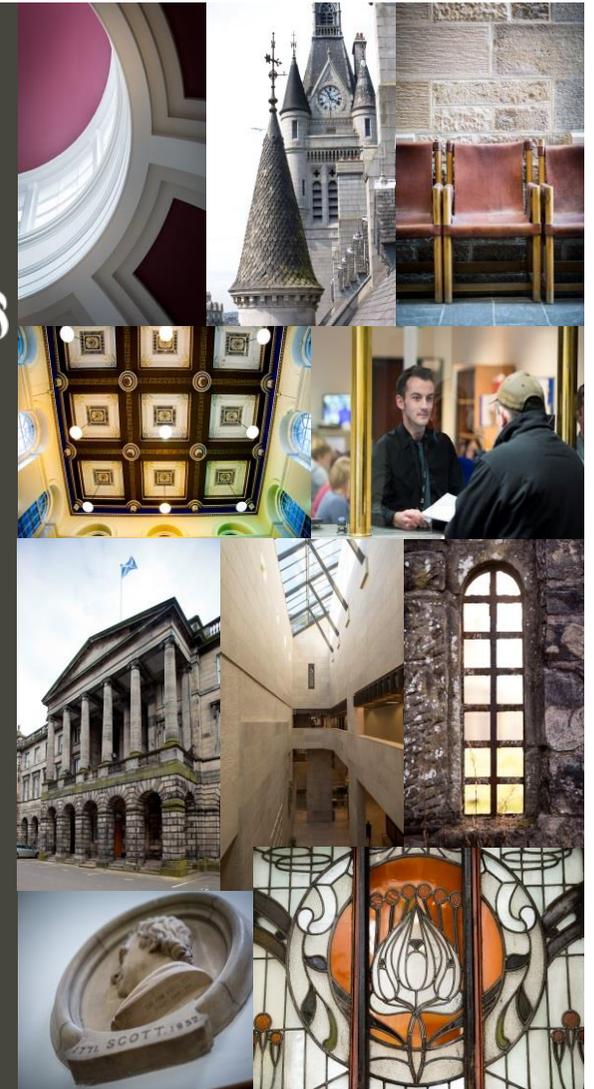


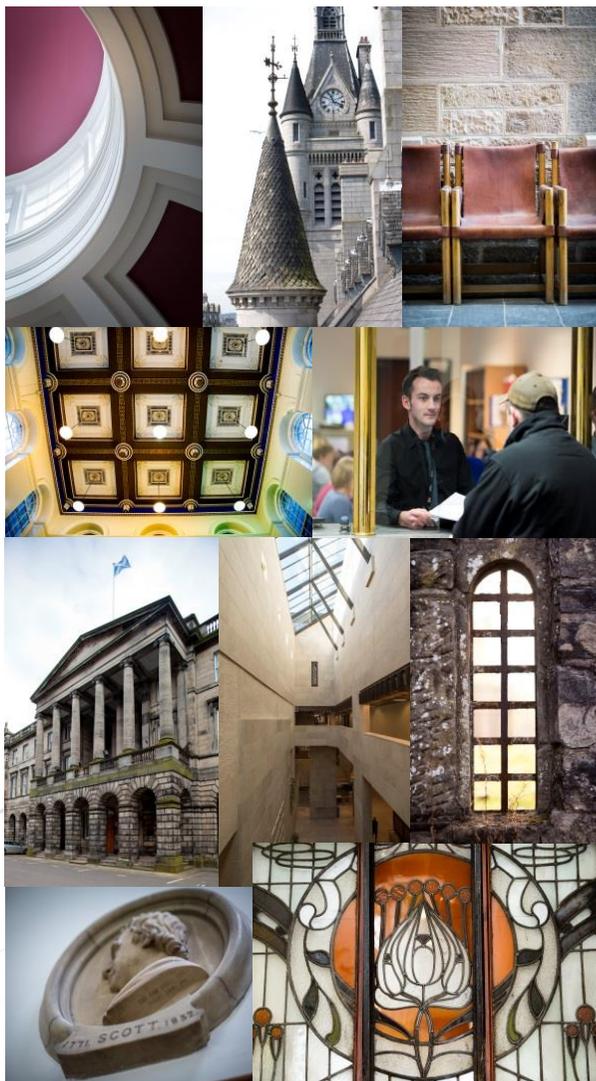
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Scottish Courts
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Corporate Plan 2017-20





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Chairman's Foreword



**Rt. Hon. Lord Carloway, Lord President and
Chairman of the SCTS Board**

This Corporate Plan sets out the strategic priorities and objectives of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) to 2020.

Scotland's justice system is on a journey of modernisation and reform. It is often said that things change only very slowly in that system. Over the period of our last plan the SCTS achieved a successful merger of the courts' and devolved tribunals' administration; implemented the civil court reform programme including the creation of the Sheriff Appeal Court and the all-Scotland personal injury court; managed the introduction of a new judicial tier in the form of summary sheriffs, and supported the establishment of the first-tier and upper Scottish Tribunals.

Each of these changes was significant in its own right. They were achieved whilst the business of our courts, tribunals and the Office of Public Guardian continued to operate smoothly. It is a testament to all those who work in the system daily to ensure we achieve our purpose – of supporting justice.

We must continue on this journey, to realise our vision of a stronger courts and tribunals service. The public rightly expect that we will take advantage of new technologies to provide a system that is accessible, fair, efficient and effective. We must never lose sight of our core duty to administer justice. We must also be open to ways in which we can improve.

The SCTS has been given the responsibility of leading proposals for system-wide change. This plan sets out how we will use that responsibility. We will work across the justice system over the coming three years. The main themes running through this plan include: completion of the civil court reform agenda; the realisation of a single, cohesive structure for tribunals administration; and the development of transformational proposals for our criminal justice system through the work of the Evidence and Procedure Review.

Alongside these major changes we will continue to learn from experience. We want to make practical improvements in areas such as the management of solemn criminal cases, the development and consolidation of case management systems and investment in our built estate. We will be developing a world-class facility in the Inverness Justice Centre. This combination of transformation and iteration will allow us to provide the best possible service. It will ensure that our justice system remains fit for purpose in an increasingly digital age.

It is a privilege to serve as the chairman of the SCTS Board. It is a task that continues to be made easier by my fellow Board members, whose commitment, insight and support are essential and much valued. We are able to set out our ambitious agenda with confidence because of the diligence, expertise and dedication of staff across the courts, tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian. Their continued commitment to providing a high-quality service is the cornerstone of our success.

Chief Executive's Introduction



Eric McQueen, Chief Executive
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

During this Corporate Plan period we will continue to deliver the most significant and visionary changes to Scotland's justice system in over a century. We do so in a time of continued financial constraint and against a backdrop of further constitutional change. Given those challenges it is essential that we plan carefully, manage effectively and work collaboratively.

We have a strong base from which to build – over the past three years our track record has been strong. Many changes have been visible to those using our services, but there has also been considerable work behind the scenes to ensure that the organisation is fit for the future. We have reduced the levels of backlog maintenance on our estate, completely upgraded our IT infrastructure to ensure it can support future innovation and maintained record levels of customer service and satisfaction throughout. This gives me confidence for the next three years – during which a range of further changes to the way in which we provide services will be achieved through innovation and the use of technology.

As an organisation we have grown, with the merger of courts and tribunals administration in 2015 creating the SCTS. In the coming years we will welcome staff currently working in tribunals administered by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service. They will join a skilled, engaged and committed workforce that provides support to all of Scotland's tribunals, courts and the Office of the Public Guardian, whilst leading change and improvement across the organisation and beyond. If our people are to continue delivering a high-quality service we must ensure that they are supported with the right facilities, systems and skills – making the SCTS a great place to work, learn and develop for all our staff.

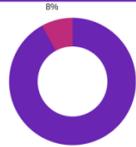
We were established as an independent body in 2010 – and whilst we value that independence we appreciate that real change can only be made to the justice system by its independent partners working together. We support the direction set in Scotland's Justice Strategy and Justice Digital Strategy. Central to that will be the work under way to explore how our criminal justice processes can make best use of technology to improve fairness, accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness. The proposals of the Evidence and Procedure Review have the potential to lead to a step-change in the longer-term, whilst delivering valuable improvements to the way in which our system deals with child and vulnerable witnesses in the shorter-term.

Working in partnership with the judiciary will remain crucial to our success – we now provide the support to a broad range of tribunal judiciary and will manage the transition to the new tribunal chamber structure over the period of this plan. Through our judicially-led Board we will continue to develop strong working relationships and support for all those who use our services.

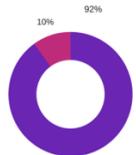
Our work is underpinned by strong risk, performance and change management systems. These allow us to monitor progress and account to the public, as we carry out the crucial task of supporting justice.



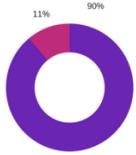
We operate in **51 geographical locations**, with **53 courts**, **70 tribunal venues** for hearings, and **15 remote video witness sites** and administrative centres.



92% OF STAFF HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCOTTISH COURTS & TRIBUNALS SERVICE PURPOSE



90% OF JUDGES SAY THEY FEEL VALUED BY SCTS STAFF



89% OF COURT USERS ARE VERY SATISFIED OR SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICE THEY RECEIVE

ANNUAL BUSINESS VOLUMES*



1742 staff



*BASED ON SCTS ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2015-16; FIGURES ARE THE NUMBER OF CASES REGISTERED

About SCTS

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) is a non-ministerial department established by the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. Its statutory function is to provide administrative support to the Scottish courts, devolved tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG). On 1 April 2015 SCTS became responsible for the administration of Scotland's devolved tribunals.

The SCTS has a presence in communities across Scotland. Court and tribunal business is conducted daily across the country in over 40 locations and, in the case of tribunal business, some 70 further remote locations.

In addition to administering Scotland's courts and tribunals SCTS supports the Office of the Public Guardian and Accountant of Court. The OPG provides guidance and undertakes investigations to protect vulnerable people under the terms of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. The Public Guardian is also the Accountant of Court.

SCTS also provides the staff and administrative support to:

- the Scottish Civil Justice Council, which drafts rules of procedure for the civil courts and advises the Lord President on the development of the civil justice system;
- the Scottish Sentencing Council, responsible for preparing sentencing guidelines, publishing guideline judgments and information about sentences imposed by the courts in Scotland.



Corporate Plan 2017-20

Our Purpose, Vision and Values

Our purpose

The purpose of SCTS is **supporting justice**. We fulfil that purpose by providing the people, buildings and services needed to support the judiciary, the courts, tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian.

Our vision

Our vision is to **build a stronger Courts and Tribunals Service** focused on improving access to justice, reducing delay and cost within the justice system and maximising the use of technology to improve our services. Scotland's courts and tribunals have a long and proud tradition of supporting justice and, whilst it can be easy to take this for granted, it is a function that every strong, successful, democratic nation needs to value and uphold. In doing so, the SCTS will ensure that the services provided by Scotland's courts, tribunals and OPG match the expectations of its people.

Our values

The core values we observe and seek to promote in others are **respect, service** and **excellence**.

“The SCTS has provided a very well respected and consistently high quality service over the twelve years since it first achieved Charter Mark accreditation for selected courts in 2004 through to CSE accreditation in 2013.”

Assessment Summary, CSE Report, 2016, available [here](#)

Our purpose → Supporting Justice

Our vision → Building a Stronger Courts and Tribunals Service

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service 

Our Behaviours – We will...

Our values

RESPECT

- Be courteous** – co-operate, treat everyone with dignity and value diversity
- Be open & fair** – encourage good performance, give and receive constructive feedback, challenge and change inappropriate behaviour
- Work as one team** – lead and manage well; trust, empower and inspire each other

SERVICE

- Deliver a professional service** – get the basics right, recognise individual needs and manage information responsibly
- Learn in all we do** – build our skills and knowledge; respond to feedback and reflect on learning and experience to improve our service
- Set an example** – always do our best, share and explain what we do and show how it relates to our priorities, policies & values

EXCELLENCE

- Innovate** – think creatively to find solutions, evaluate ideas and deliver continuous improvement
- Collaborate** – work with our customers and partners to share experience and lead change to improve the justice system
- Be accountable** – explain our plans and performance, understand the risks we face and make clear decisions that deliver improvement, sustainability and efficiency

Our Structure – The SCTS Board

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service is an independent, judicially-led, public body, with the composition of the Board set in statute.

Chaired by the Lord President, Scotland's most senior judge, its membership is drawn from those holding judicial office, members with a legal background and independent members from outwith the justice system. More about each Board member is available [here](#) on our website.



From left to right (back row): Eric McQueen, Dr Kirsty J Hood QC, Sheriff Principal Duncan L Murray, Sheriff A Grant McCulloch, Dr Joe Morrow QC, Mrs Johan Findlay JP OBE, Colonel (Retired) John David McIlroy BSc CEng FICE, Lord Justice Clerk Rt. Hon Lady Dorrian
From left to right (front row): Prof R Hugh MacDougall, Rt. Hon Lady Smith, Rt. Hon Lord Carloway, Lord President, Sheriff Iona McDonald, Mr Simon J D Catto, Mr Joseph Al-Gharabally

The Board sets the strategic direction of the SCTS, makes the key decisions and monitors progress to ensure delivery of our strategic priorities. The Board is supported by four committees covering audit and risk; people; remuneration; and estates, health & safety, fire and security.

Each of the committees oversees major projects and programmes relevant to its area, providing specialist direction and guidance to ensure effective project and programme management at a strategic level.

Our Structure – The Executive Team



Day-to-day management responsibility for the staff and operation of the SCTS is delegated to the Chief Executive, who is also a member of the SCTS Board. The Chief Executive is supported by four executive directors. Together they make up the Executive Team responsible for corporate and operational delivery. The Judicial Office for Scotland is a separate office established within the SCTS to provide support to the Lord President in fulfilling his responsibilities as the head of the Scottish Judiciary.

Our Work

The work of the SCTS covers a broader range of issues than you may think. In providing support to Scotland's courts, devolved tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian we touch the lives of many people on a daily basis – be that through formal court or tribunal business, fulfilling your civic duty as a juror, paying fees or fines, seeking help in managing the affairs of an incapable adult or dealing with the estate of a loved one who has passed away. To achieve all these things we focus on working as one team and take pride in our high levels of customer service.



£ 120m

Our expenditure in 2015-16: Over 85% invested in the front line including 28% on our historic and diverse estate

c. 130,000 criminal cases registered annually

c. 70,000 civil cases registered annually

c. 5,000 tribunal cases registered annually

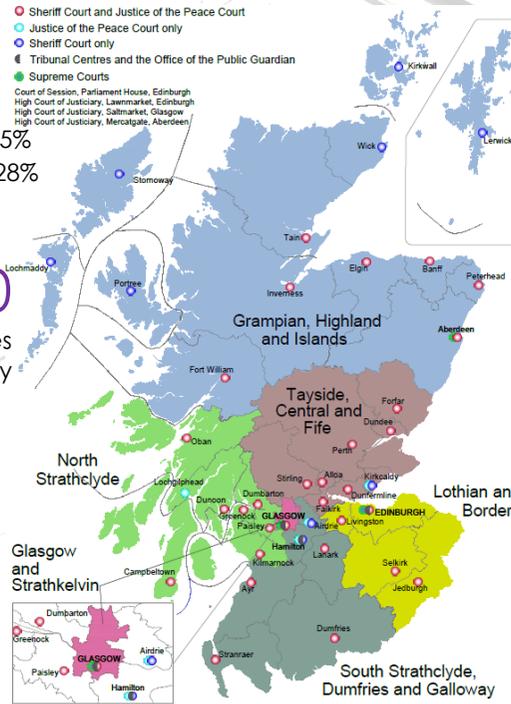
c. 55,000 powers of attorney registered annually by OPG

1742 staff

Our estate comprises 71 buildings with 86% being historic, listed and pre-1900

Scotland's devolved tribunals deal with a broad range of matters including housing, tax, mental health and educational needs

As at February 2017, 88% of the value of Sheriff Court fines imposed over the past three years had either been successfully collected by SCTS staff or is on track to be collected.



Supporting Justice – 2017-20

i. Trends, Challenges & Opportunities

As we move into a new planning period it is important to consider the key external factors influencing our work and the key trends in society that may affect us over the coming years.

Court Business

Whilst recorded crime is at a record low the level of cases entering the court system has remained relatively static in recent years, with notable increases in certain case types such as those relating to domestic abuse.

An increasing proportion of cases involve allegations of sexual offending – these tend to take longer to progress through the system than other case types. The use of video evidence and complex data allows cases to be pursued that may not have been in the past – this is positive for the justice system although it has an impact on the complexity and length of court cases.

For these reasons we believe that court business levels will remain relatively high over the coming three years, requiring us to maintain resourcing and to continue to work with partners to identify more effective ways in which cases can be managed and resolved.

“The structured approach of the MA programme has helped me develop personally and gain real workplace experience. All this and a nationally recognised qualification too!”

Nicole Stevenson, Modern Apprentice



Tribunals

An ageing population, increasing levels of private rented housing tenure and rising public expectations of the service they will receive from public authorities all create increases in business for tribunals.

With the prospect of the administration of tribunals in reserved areas such as employment and immigration being transferred to the SCTS in the coming years the need to deliver high quality support and administration to meet new, growing and complex tribunal workloads is clear.

Office of the Public Guardian

The situation is similar in relation to the workload of the Office of the Public Guardian, which has experienced significant year-on-year rises in the numbers of powers of attorney and guardianship orders registered. These are trends we expect to continue and detailed business projections will be set out in our annual Business Plans.

View the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service 2017-18 Business Plan, describing our objectives and outcomes for the year



Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service



Supporting Justice – 2017-20

i. Trends, Challenges & Opportunities (cont.)

Changing Expectations

Changes across society are tending to increase demand for some of the services we provide. More generally **digital services** will continue to transform the way we interact with one another, socially and professionally.

Public expectations for 24/7 self-service facilities and real-time information will continue to grow. Over the past three years we have invested significantly in our core digital infrastructure to ensure it is robust and capable of supporting future service improvements. We now have the opportunity to build on our programme of innovation to offer new ways of doing business, which can better meet customer needs and realise efficiencies.

Equally, we need to prepare for the potentially negative aspects that a greater use of technology can bring – the potential impact that cyber-crime can have on systems and infrastructure. We must build IT skills across our workforce whilst ensuring that the justice system as a whole can manage the challenges and realise the benefits of technology developing at pace.

Cultural Diversity

As a major employer and an organisation dealing with people from all walks of life we need to cater for the increasing cultural diversity and working practices of those who work for and interact with us. As people from the “Millennial generation” are increasingly building portfolio careers, we need SCTS to remain an attractive place to work, learn and build skills. We also need to be aware of that diversity across our whole business, ensuring that our services cater properly for the wide range of languages, cultures and methods of communication people use daily.

We will build on recent improvements made that ensure the best possible service is available to victims and witnesses, especially child and vulnerable witnesses for whom involvement in the legal process can be particularly stressful. We will also continue to focus on our equality agenda, ensuring that we provide a high level of service and support to both court users and staff, respecting their different and unique characteristics.

Embracing Change

Finally, the potential for further significant legislative and policy change remains high over the coming three years. We are already planning for the transfer of the administration of a number of reserved tribunals towards the end of this period as a consequence of the recommendations of the Smith Commission.

The impact of Brexit and its associated financial and constitutional consequences is not yet clear, but will need to be factored into our work, alongside other policy and process changes that will help us to improve the support we provide to courts, tribunals and the OPG. Significant change brings with it risks, but also opportunities to work together with partners in new and different ways; to take on new responsibilities and to make positive changes across the system as a whole.

Our Strategy

In 2014 the SCTS Board set out a long-term vision for the organisation, focused on realising the benefits from reform, continually improving services to users and ensuring that the organisation is well managed and affordable in the long term. That vision remains sound, although the breadth of our work and the requirements of those who use our services have changed over the past three years and will continue to do so over the coming three-year period.

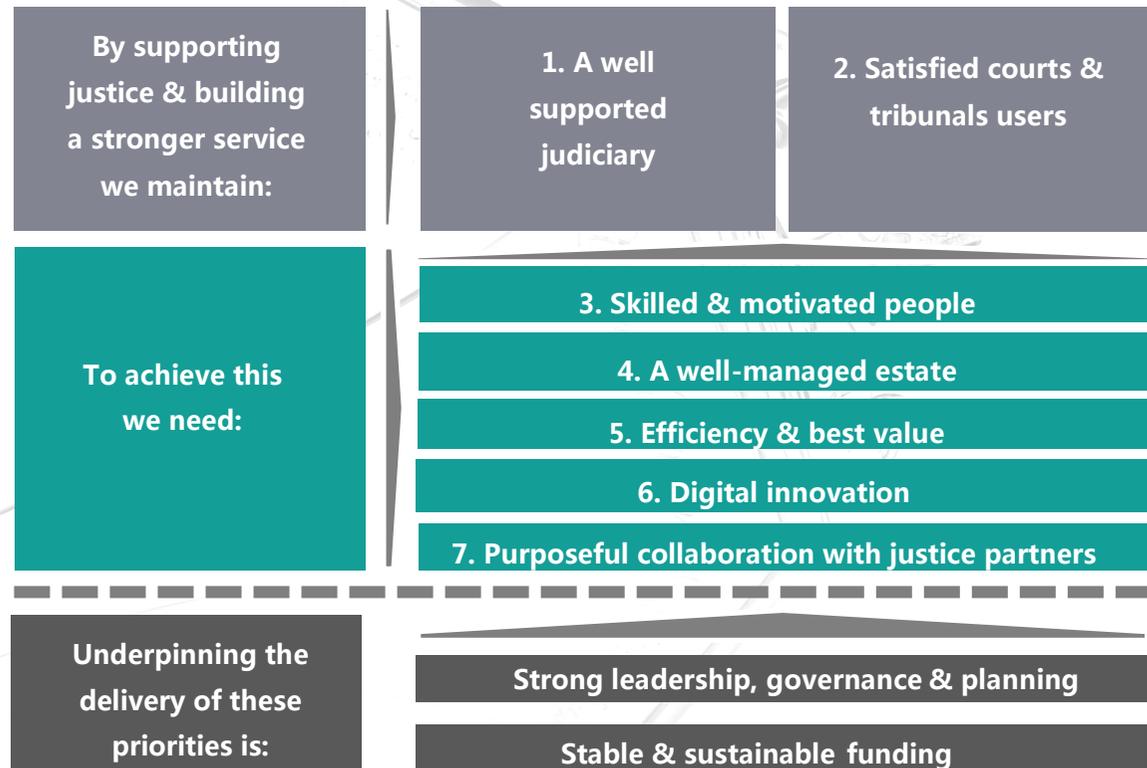
The SCTS strategy map illustrates how our purpose and vision are translated into seven strategic priorities – key areas on which we will focus over the next three years.

Our first two priorities are to ensure effective support to Scotland's courts' and tribunals' judiciary, whilst maintaining or improving levels of satisfaction amongst those who use Scotland's courts, tribunals and the OPG. Our service can only be said to be effective if these priorities are met.

Priorities 3-7 relate to the people, assets, systems, processes and partnerships that we can develop, improve and invest in over the coming years to ensure our service remains efficient, responsive and innovative. More detailed objectives for the coming three years are detailed under each of these priorities from [page 19](#). Whilst these priorities set a clear direction for what we aim to achieve over the coming three years, we will only be successful if the approach we take is underpinned by clear leadership, good planning and stable funding that allows us to invest for the future.

Several key reform areas that we will focus on over the coming three years have been identified that, taken together, will help fulfil our purpose and vision. Further detail on these can be found in the next section of this plan.

SCTS Strategy Map



Key Reform Areas 2017-20

i. Civil Justice Reform

Over the period of our last Corporate Plan we led the introduction of the most far-reaching range of reforms to Scotland's civil justice system in over a century. Based on the recommendations in Lord Gill's Scottish Civil Courts Review, the Courts Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 paved the way for major change including: increasing the threshold under which the sheriff court deals exclusively with civil cases; establishing the new all-Scotland Personal Injury Court and Sheriff Appeal Court; creating the new office of summary sheriff; and allowing the development and introduction of the new civil simple procedure.

At the same time we continued investing in our estate and digital infrastructure: reducing levels of historic backlog maintenance, upgrading our IT networks and improving courtroom technology – including Wi-Fi availability in all courts. With these significant policy and structural changes now largely in place the challenge over the coming three years is twofold:

- to ensure that we realise the **long-term benefits** of reforms fully, bedding in the new structures, reviewing their effectiveness and, where necessary, making changes to the way we administer, resource and organise civil court business. This will require us to provide a continually high level of support to the judiciary, equip our staff with the right systems and skills and assist our partners – sharing information with them to ensure that cases are fairly and efficiently managed.
- to develop and invest in **technology and digital service provision** to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil justice system. This is not about trying to digitise the old system – we will work to develop new court rules, processes and systems that allow us to transform the way in which civil court business is transacted. In making this change we recognise that involving all those who use the system is as important as making use of new capabilities.

“This is not just about fixing the problem of the current system, tinkering with what we have; it should be about taking advantage of new technologies to design a justice system that will meet the requirements of society in years to come.**”**

Lady Dorian, *Digital Justice Strategy: A view from the courts*, available [here](#)



The new **Sheriff Appeal Court** accommodation, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh

Key Reform Areas 2017-20

i. Civil Justice Reform (cont.)

Towards the end of 2016 we introduced a new **civil case management system** into the sheriff courts which provides an advanced, user-friendly and resilient platform on which to build. In 2017 it will be rolled-out to the Court of Session and the ability to submit simple procedure cases online will mark the beginning of a move away from the need to have large volumes of case papers submitted to (and presented in) court.

Moving towards full digital provision of civil court business will take a number of years and will require us to work across the justice system, supporting the goals set out in the justice digital strategy. We will publish our own **digital strategy**, setting out in detail the key priorities and activities we will take forward to increase digital service provision and ensure that these benefit all those who use the system.

Over the coming three years we expect to see the expansion of digital evidence presentation for cases heard in court. This will be accompanied by an increase in the online management of procedural business by both parties and the judiciary, where formal hearings are not required. This increased use of technology will reduce the need for physical attendance at a court or tribunal to those hearings where it is genuinely necessary.

In addition to court and tribunal business we will maintain a clear focus on the work of the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG). Power of Attorney applications continue to rise year on year, with the OPG registering over 200 POAs per working day on average. Skilled people, high-quality systems and processes are required to ensure that these powers are quickly and efficiently registered. Over the period of this plan we will completely upgrade the OPG case management systems, using the platform provided by the civil case management system already introduced into the sheriff courts.

The role and responsibilities of the OPG and the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland may both feature as the Scottish Government conducts a review of existing adults with incapacity legislation in 2017/18. This could lead to changes in the way in which guardianship orders are granted. Around the same time the United Nations will audit the UK's adults with incapacity legislation. We will play a full part in these processes, to ensure that the operational expertise of the OPG, tribunals' judiciary and our staff are all included in any analysis of the current system and proposals for reform.

Office of the
Public Guardian (Scotland)



“Working towards amending guardianship supervision brings us closer to a tailored approach. We aim to offer proportionality in supervision without dilution of the essential safeguards.**”**

Fiona Brown, Office of the Public Guardian



Key Reform Areas 2017-20

ii. Supporting Scotland's Tribunals

Tribunals play a crucial role in Scotland's justice system. Whilst the courts deal with a broad range of business in a well-recognised setting there are a number of areas of the law where issues can be heard or disputes resolved more effectively in the tribunal setting – drawing on the expertise of specialist panel members, who often combine that role with a distinct professional career, making use of bespoke and, in some cases, less formal procedures and rules.

The Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014 created a new, coherent structure for the leadership and administration of Scotland's devolved tribunals. Supported by the SCTS and under the leadership of the Lord President and the President of Scottish Tribunals the devolved tribunals will transfer into the new structure on a phased basis. This transfer commenced in December 2016 with the Private Rented Housing Panel and the Homeowners Housing Panel forming the new First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber).

The establishment of the SCTS in April 2015 brought the administration of Scotland's devolved tribunals within the responsibility of the judicially-led SCTS Board, pooling resources and expertise to support Scotland's judiciary. The creation of a distinct Tribunals Operations unit within SCTS has ensured that the specialist support required to manage tribunal business has been maintained within the unified organisation.

“Scottish Tribunals will deliver high-quality decision-making, equal treatment for all parties and effective case management that is proportionate to the level of complexity.**”**

Lady Smith, President of Scottish Tribunals



Tribunals and their panel members often work remotely – their judiciary are principally part-time and the operating practices of each tribunal vary in order to provide the greatest level of accessibility and support to those who use the tribunal.

Our investments in technology and new facilities will allow us to offer flexible, responsive support to the tribunal and panel members who support the operation of this highly-regarded system – there are over 500 such members at present and this will rise to around 1,000 as the administration of reserved tribunals is transferred.

Key Reform Areas 2017-20

ii. Supporting Scotland's Tribunals (cont.)

In the coming three years our work to support the tribunals will be focused around three main areas:

1. Managing the transition of Scotland's devolved tribunals into the new tribunal structure on a phased basis. With the legislation establishing the First and Upper tier Tribunals for Scotland in place and the first transfer delivered successfully, we must maintain a clear focus on transferring all the devolved tribunals into the new structure – to realise the consistent and cohesive structure and leadership envisioned by the Tribunals (Scotland) 2014 Act.

There will be a range of transfers in 2017-18, including the Tax Tribunal, the Additional Support Needs Tribunals (into the Health and Education Chamber) the Scottish Charity Appeals Panel (into the General Regulatory Chamber) and further housing jurisdictions. Scotland's largest devolved tribunal, the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland, is due to transfer in 2018-19 as is the Lands Tribunal for Scotland. Transfers of NHS tribunals and Education Appeals Committees will continue into 2020.

In supporting these transfers it will be crucial to ensure that the day-to-day business of the tribunals is effectively maintained whilst, at the same time, opportunities for collaboration, innovation and the sharing of best practice are taken – so that the benefits of each tribunal sitting within a chamber and each chamber sitting within the overarching structure are fully realised.

2. Leading work to ensure that the devolution of administration of reserved tribunals to the SCTS is effectively managed. The Smith Commission proposed that responsibility for the administration of Scottish cases falling to be heard by the majority of tribunals whose functions relate to reserved areas of UK law should be devolved to Scottish Ministers. Section 39 of the Scotland Act 2016 implemented that proposal – making it possible for these functions to be transferred to Scottish Ministers.

Whilst detailed planning on the precise time and form of these transfers remains at a relatively early stage it is now clear that the responsibility for administering tribunal business in relation to the vast majority of currently “reserved” tribunals – including employment, social security, tax and immigration – will transfer from Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to the SCTS towards the end of this corporate planning period (late 2019/early 2020). This is a major undertaking and detailed planning has already commenced.

The transfer of the administration of reserved tribunals to the SCTS poses a number of practical challenges but offers a great number of opportunities – allowing us to build a unified administration for all of Scotland's courts and tribunals, under Scotland's senior judiciary. On a practical level the transfer will also allow us to welcome a number of HMCTS staff based in Scotland into the SCTS, create opportunities for co-location, sharing of services, best practice and the development of consistent case management systems. By the end of this 3-year period SCTS will be the organisation that supports all of Scotland's courts and tribunals in their crucial role of upholding justice.

3. As a consequence of the two significant changes outlined above it will be incumbent on **SCTS to keep developing its understanding of and support for, the tribunals' judiciary.** As mentioned above tribunals, and the judiciary that support them, operate in different ways from formal courts – in the interests of supporting those who use them and reaching the right decisions in the most effective way. We need to fully appreciate this diversity and develop arrangements that complement the way in which tribunals operate.

Key Reform Areas 2017-20

iii. Criminal Justice Reform: Evidence and Procedure Review

Whilst the 2014-17 planning period was characterised by significant reforms to Scotland's civil justice system the coming three years will see the development and introduction of major changes to Scotland's criminal justice system. The source for most of these changes is the work of the Evidence and Procedure Review – a multi-agency collaboration led by the SCTS, building consensus around reforms that can be made to our criminal justice system to ensure it realises the benefits of modern technology. Its propositions are designed to improve the quality of evidence presented in criminal trials whilst improving efficiency, effectiveness and fairness for all those involved in it. The work of the review has explored two distinct areas:

i. Redesigning summary criminal procedure

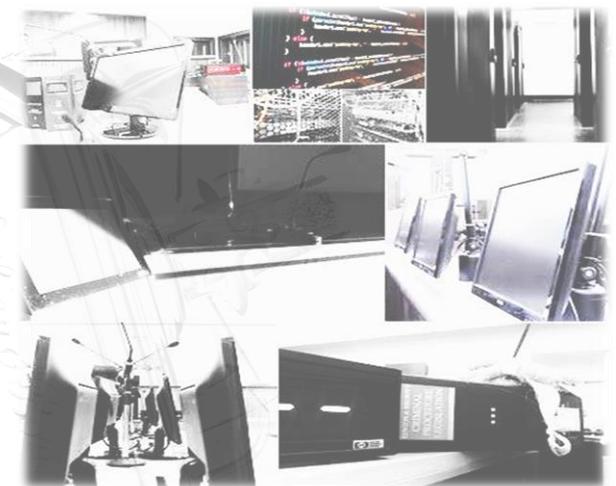
The case for further reform of the summary justice system is strong. In 2015-16 approximately 52,000 trial diets called in the sheriff courts but only 9,000 proceeded with evidence being led. In the same year it was estimated that some 460,000 witnesses were cited to give evidence but only 92,000 were required to do so. The propositions made by the Evidence and Procedure Review seek to improve the operation of the summary justice system putting stronger case management at its core, based around the following key principles:

- Wherever possible all pre-trial procedure should take place as part of a **digital case management process**, with court hearings reserved for contested pre-trial preliminary pleas or case management issues.
- Intermediate and trial diets should **not be allocated upon the lodging of a not guilty plea** as they are at present. Trial diets should only be allocated (and witnesses cited) after the case management process is complete.
- **Strong judicial oversight** of the case management process should be applied to bring about more agreement of evidence where possible, and to ensure trials focus on what is truly in dispute.
- In those cases in which guilty pleas are tendered, there should be the option for **sentencing to be conducted digitally** without the need for the accused to appear in court.

These changes would represent the most significant overhaul in our criminal justice process in living memory – and will take time to implement. For them to be successful a number of other steps will need to be taken in advance, including the establishment of a “Digital Evidence and Information Vault” for the storage and sharing of criminal case information and the creation of a new criminal case management system – replacing existing court systems to facilitate digital case management and communication between prosecution, defence and court professionals.

“We must look to the radical reform identified in the Evidence and Procedure Review. Exploiting the opportunity which digital technology presents is needed to make sure we continue to have a justice system that matches public expectation in the 21st century.”

Lord Carloway, Lord President, Opening of new courtrooms at Glasgow High Court, 3rd February 2017



Key Reform Areas 2017-20

iii. Criminal Justice Reform: Evidence and Procedure Review

ii. A new approach to taking evidence from child and vulnerable witnesses

Victims and witnesses often find themselves involved in the court system through no action or fault of their own – and the role they play is crucial. Significant improvements in the service provided to victims and witnesses have been achieved over the past few years, including the introduction of service standards agreed by all major justice agencies (which are monitored and reported on annually) and the extension of access to special measures for witnesses in a broader range of circumstances – including the establishment of 10 victim and witness video centres. The work led by the Evidence and Procedure Review noted that the experience of giving evidence in court can be particularly distressing for child and vulnerable witnesses. The Next Steps report recommended that:

“... initially for solemn cases, there should be a systematic approach to the evidence of children or vulnerable witnesses in which it should be presumed that the evidence-in-chief of such a witness will be captured and presented at trial in pre-recorded form; and that the subsequent cross-examination of that witness will also, on application, be recorded in advance of trial.”

This will be another significant change in the way in which a proportion of criminal businesses is managed in future – the longer term vision is to develop an approach to gathering the evidence of vulnerable victims and witnesses that, particularly for child witnesses:

- minimises the likelihood of subjecting them to further harm or trauma;
- takes into account their communication needs;
- allows them to give all of their best evidence as early as possible after the alleged offence is reported.

“*My view is that children should be spared the trauma of giving evidence in a formal court environment. Indeed, I want to eliminate the need for children to attend court at all during the trial.”*

**Michael Matheson, MSP - Cabinet Secretary for Justice,
Keynote speech at Getting it Right for Child Witnesses,
Justice for Children Conference, 12th October 2016**



Over the coming 3 years we will be working in partnership with the Scottish Government, other justice agencies and a wide range of court users to support changes to both law and practice that will make these principles a reality.

SCTS has led the development of these propositions, which provide the opportunity to modernise and improve the justice system but, most importantly, to improve the quality of evidence given, increasing the ability of our justice processes to ascertain the truth.

Key Reform Areas 2017-20

iv. Collaboration and Partnership

Working Together

The significant programme of reform set out in our previous plan could not have been achieved without collaboration at both local and national levels. We work with a range of partners day-in, day-out – providing the facilities, systems and support that keep the courts and tribunals running.

By working together in this way system-wide challenges can be addressed, such as managing increases in case waiting periods experienced in 2014-15 due to the proactive approach taken by the police and prosecution to tackle **domestic abuse**. The change in approach led to a spike in trial waiting periods which has now been addressed through joint action. In the course of 2017 we will ensure that waiting times for domestic abuse cases fall within an 8-10 week period, agreed as optimal with our partners.

Scotland's six **Local Criminal Justice Boards**, led by Sheriffs Principal, support effective joint working and performance monitoring across the country. SCTS provides performance analysis and administration to the Boards, ensuring that proposals and plans are turned into action. The Boards operate within a national framework, but use local knowledge and flexibility to build relationships and working arrangements that keep the system running smoothly. We will continue to support the work of the Boards as further system changes are introduced in summer 2017 – such as reforms to solemn criminal procedure intended to reduce the level of case churn – building on the 2015 Practice Note on solemn procedure issued by the then Lord Justice Clerk.

As members of the **Justice Board for Scotland** we have the opportunity to develop and shape policy, share knowledge and pool resources to support achievement of the vision and outcomes set out in the [Justice Strategy for Scotland](#). This partnership work is crucial if we are to ensure that the justice system achieves all that the sum of its parts is capable of. We continue to support the shared agenda of the Board which includes the proposals on civil, criminal and tribunal reform outlined in this plan.

Community Justice

SCTS is, in terms of the **Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016**, a named statutory partner in the newly created local community justice partnerships. These allow a range of agencies to work together to prevent and reduce reoffending and the harm it causes by supporting and managing people to successfully reintegrate into the community. SCTS is required as a statutory partner to participate in the planning, delivery and evaluation of community justice services but must do so only to the extent it does not conflict with our statutory duties of supporting the courts and the independent sentencing decisions of the judiciary.

Whilst the day in court is only one small part of the experience of victims, those on whom a community penalty is imposed, and their families, it is a crucial part of the justice system and we are working at local level to identify areas where courts can usefully contribute to achieving better outcomes for community justice as a whole.

Key Reform Areas 2017-20

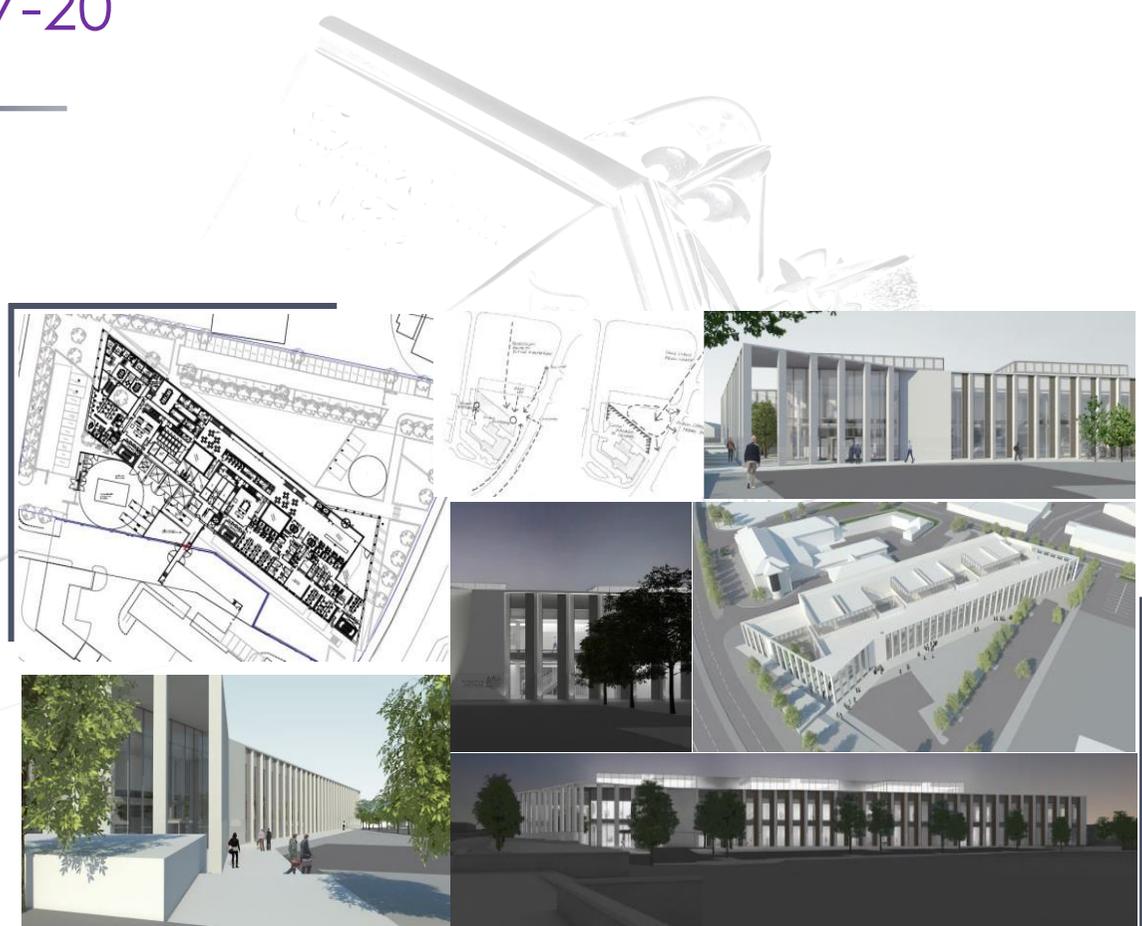
iv. Collaboration and Partnership

Building Together – Inverness Justice Centre

Work has commenced on the development of a major new justice centre which will replace the existing Inverness Sheriff Court and is due to open in 2019. The centre provides the opportunity for a broad range of services to be provided in a secure, sustainable and modern environment – improving efficiency for all the agencies working there and enhancing the experience for all those using the courts, tribunals and support services that will be based in the complex.

As the first of its kind the Inverness Justice Centre gives us the opportunity to design a facility with the future delivery of justice in mind – making use of new technology, combined with traditional high-quality construction to create a space in which the justice system can operate to its full potential.

SCTS is leading the multi-agency project to deliver the justice centre which will set the standard for the provision of justice services – and is an approach we hope to be able to replicate in other areas where facilities are in need of improvement – particularly in Fife, where early plans for the development of a Justice Centre in Kirkcaldy are under development.



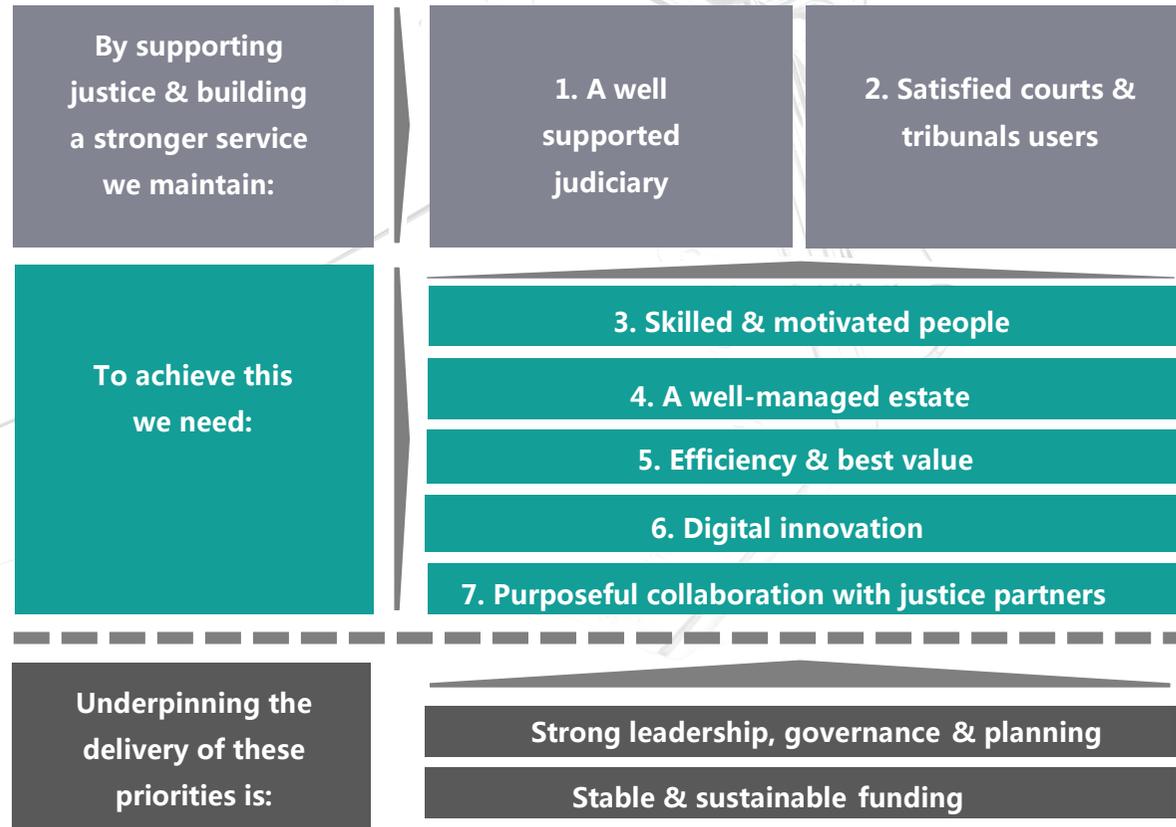
Our Strategic Priorities and Key Objectives 2017-20

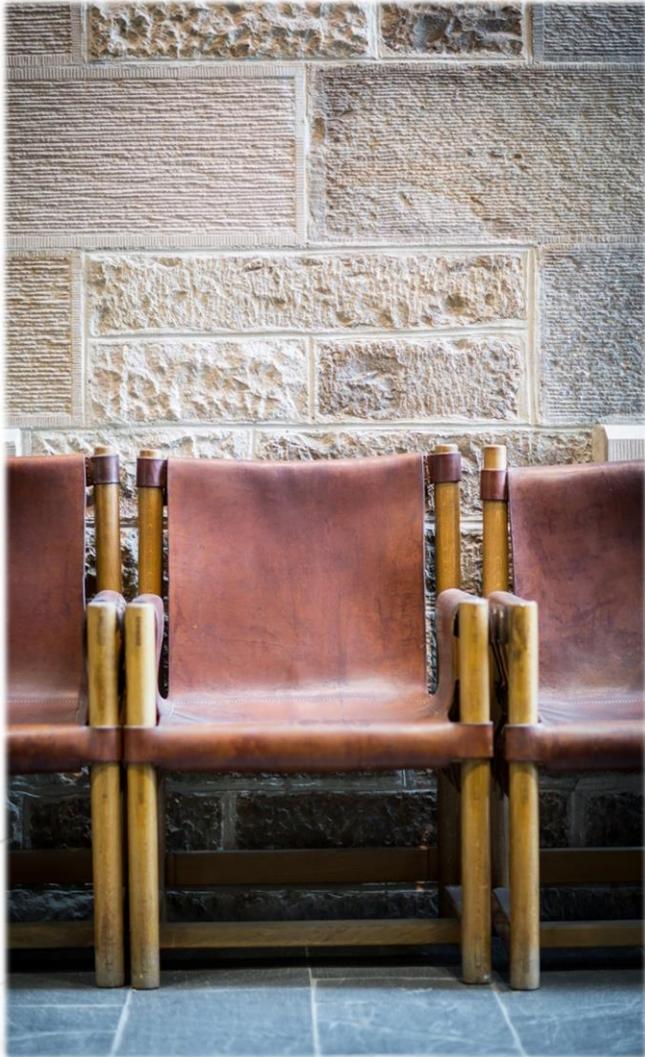
SCTS Strategy Map

Our strategy map identifies **seven key strategic priorities**. By focusing our efforts on these we will be able to achieve our purpose and vision over the coming three years.

For each of these priorities, we have set out what we aim to achieve, over the coming pages, by detailing the **main strategic objectives** that will be delivered over the course of the corporate planning period. These objectives will, in turn, be broken down into greater detail in annual business plans, specific programme and project delivery plans.

By setting our strategic priorities and objectives in this plan we create a clear direction of travel for the organisation over the coming three years, whilst maintaining a degree of flexibility to respond to challenges, opportunities and innovations that may arise.





A Well Supported Judiciary

Strategic Priority 1

We aim to ensure that the right technology, people, systems and processes are in place to assist the judiciary to dispense justice effectively.

Objectives

- 1.1 We will deliver a modern tribunal chamber structure for Scotland, including the transfer of the administration of reserved tribunals to SCTS and improvements in the systems, processes and operational support provided to the judiciary.
- 1.2 We will support the Lord President and Sheriffs Principal in delivering an effective structure for the disposal of court business across Scotland, including the continued deployment of summary sheriffs.
- 1.3 We will provide the staff, resources and tools required to support judicial case management as it increasingly becomes the norm.
- 1.4 We will deliver a state-of-the-art justice centre in Inverness that will support multi-agency collaboration and develop proposals for a further centre in Fife.
- 1.5 We will support the judiciary in the adoption of digital processes and further procedural change aimed at improving the justice system, including changes proposed under the Evidence and Procedure Review.

“Staff act in a professional manner and their contribution to planning, developing and delivering service is much valued.**”**

Assessment Summary, CSE Report, 2016, available [here](#)

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



Satisfied Courts & Tribunals Users



Strategic Priority 2

We will consistently deliver high-quality customer service, inspiring confidence in those who use our services, promoting inclusiveness and developing our understanding of customer needs through ongoing feedback and quality assessment.

Objectives

- 2.1 We will introduce new procedures that will make it routine for the evidence and examination of children and vulnerable witnesses to be recorded in advance of trial, in an appropriate environment that does not confuse, distress or further traumatise the witness.
- 2.2 We will continue to seek the views of all those who use our services through quality surveys and feedback to meet diverse user needs, assess the effectiveness of our service and inform further improvement.
- 2.3 We will use the Customer Service Excellence standard to measure and improve upon the quality of service we deliver.
- 2.4 We will monitor and improve service standards for victims and witnesses – building on the current standards, customer feedback and the opportunities afforded by new technology.

“Overall levels of satisfaction for both professionals and non-professionals were high, with 93% of professionals being either ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ satisfied and 89% of non-professionals being either ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ satisfied.”

SCTS Court Users Satisfaction Survey, 2015, available [here](#)



Skilled & Motivated People

Strategic Priority 3

We will maintain a skilled and motivated workforce supporting the judiciary and providing excellent customer service across the tribunals, courts and Office of the Public Guardian (OPG).

Objectives

- 3.1 We will establish a new learning and development framework, transforming the delivery of training, learning and development by using a blended approach that gives access to knowledge and support when and where required.
- 3.2 We will ensure that our resourcing policy gives us the skills and competencies we require to be successful – using a mixture of secondments, apprenticeships and the development of professional qualifications and standards.
- 3.3 We will implement our new People Strategy, taking a strategic approach to succession planning, talent management, career progression and lifelong learning.
- 3.4 We will ensure that we have the right policies, structures and resources in place to maintain a diverse and integrated workforce as our responsibilities expand.

“The variety of work I’ve been involved in has been a great experience for me – my apprenticeship has also allowed me to develop new skills that I will use as my career develops.”

Maryth Hunter, Modern Apprentice, Perth Sheriff Court



Major Estates Investments

Scotland's legal system continually develops in response to our changing society. Our estate reflects that dynamic. We have invested significantly over the last decade, maintaining and modernising, rationalising, and introducing new facilities. We continue that commitment for the next decade in our Estates Strategy.

<p>2007</p> <p>New courts in Elgin & Greenock; Parliament House improvement. £26m invested in key local court locations.</p>	<p>2008</p> <p>New Courts in Alloa, Dumbarton, Stirling £22m invested in developing new facilities in Tayside, Central and Fife.</p>
<p>2011</p> <p>Parliament House Project £20.2m invested refurbishing & upgrading - an historically significant building in Scotland: it was the pre-Union home of Scotland's parliament.</p>	<p>2013</p> <p>Aberdeen Civil Centre & Parliament House Project £23.7m invested. Parliament House project delivered on time improving services.</p>
<p>2014</p> <p>Aberdeen Civil Centre and Forfar Court Extension £12.5m invested to deliver essential extensions in line with needs and expectations.</p>	<p>2015/16</p> <p>Additional Courts: Saltmarket, Glasgow & Edinburgh Sheriff Court £8.7m invested providing additional courts in key sheriff and high court locations.</p>
<p>2017</p> <p>Inverness Justice Centre Project Planning and constructions commences on purpose built facility.</p>	

A Well-Managed Estate

Strategic Priority 4

We will develop and maintain our built infrastructure to provide a high-quality, safe, secure and sustainable environment for everyone using our services.

Objectives

- 4.1 We will support the justice reform agenda by targeting investment across the courts estate, facilitating the use of technology and collaboration amongst partners to deliver business effectively.
- 4.2 We will invest in and develop the tribunals' estate, exploring the potential to bring services together and improve facilities for all those who use them.
- 4.3 We will increase the sustainability of our built estate by continuing to target historic backlog maintenance and meeting the challenging reduction targets set in our Carbon Management Plan.
- 4.4 We will explore the potential for the development of further justice centres in key population centres across Scotland – to support multi-agency collaboration should further funding become available.

Maintaining and improving our diverse estate is a key priority for SCTS: making sure buildings are safe, comfortable and modernised, whilst delivering sustainably where we can.”

David Currie, Director
Property Services



effective. reliable
economic. digital by
design

+£120,000 saved citing
jurors 2015-16

Scottish Courts
Tribunals Service

£9m automated
transactions 2015-16

49% fines automated
or centralised 2015-16

SCTS Annual Reports & Accounts 2015-16

Efficiency & Best Value

Strategic Priority 5

We will secure a stable financial base that allows us to continually improve our services and be sustainable in the long term. We will keep our processes under review to make sure that we deliver business in an effective, reliable and economical way.

Objectives

- 5.1 We will work with partners to ensure that Scotland's legal, technical and operational framework ensures that people only attend court in person when there is a clear benefit in doing so.
- 5.2 We will develop a high-quality web presence providing clear user advice, information and access to new digital services as these are developed.
- 5.3 We will continue to review internal business processes to maximise efficiency and effectiveness, thereby achieving best value.
- 5.4 We will review our fee structures to ensure that fees incentivise efficient and effective practice and are matched to the costs of activity.

The success of the One Stage Citation and Hybrid Mail projects brought significant process efficiencies that improved the juror experience, produced significant cost savings for the organisation and delivered important environmental benefits.”

Ian Horne, Business Improvement Manager



Digital Innovation

Strategic Priority 6

We will place digital innovation at the centre of what we do, making sure that we maximise the opportunities afforded by technology to improve processes, provide easy access to information, minimise physical appearance and support quicker outcomes.

Objectives

- 6.1 We will extend our integrated case management system to other business areas, providing an efficient platform for case management and electronic data interchange.
- 6.2 We will invest in systems to support effective mobile working and collaboration for the judiciary and staff.
- 6.3 We will invest in the security and resilience of our networks and systems to underpin our increasing use of digital services and to mitigate the increasing threat of cybercrime.
- 6.4 We will work with our partners to refresh and develop the SCTS Digital Strategy and collaborate to deliver shared capabilities and common best practices.

“The upgrade of court room equipment across the Dundee courts has been invaluable. Having up to date technology means we can work confidently in a modern environment.”

Keith Macleod, Court Officer
Dundee Sheriff Court



Purposeful Collaboration with Justice Bodies

Strategic Priority 7

We will work with justice bodies to deliver significant change and improvement to Scotland's justice system – through collaboration, communication and reform.

Objectives

- 7.1 We will, as members of Scotland's Justice Board and its six local criminal justice boards, work in partnership with justice agencies, professional groups and the third sector to maintain and improve system performance, integrating long-term policy development with practical operational improvements.
- 7.2 We will work with the UK Government, Scottish Government and justice partners to deliver a smooth transition of the administration of reserved tribunals to the SCTS.
- 7.3 We will lead the development of reforms to criminal business set out in the Evidence and Procedure Review, introducing a new approach to case-management, using digital evidence and online case-management to eliminate unnecessary, routine and often repeated hearings in court.
- 7.4 We will explore the potential to make greater use of online and alternative dispute resolution in civil and administrative cases – avoiding the need for hearings where matters can be settled.

“The purpose of introducing a new, digitally enabled case management system should be to allow for the earliest consideration by all parties of the evidence that is being brought in the case, with a focus on those matters on which the case will be determined.”

Evidence and Procedure Review – Next Steps, available [here](#)

Monitoring Progress & Performance

This plan sets out our strategic priorities and objectives over the three-year period from 2017-20. It will be supported by corporate strategies setting out our longer-term direction on Estates, Finance, People and Digital development.

Overall responsibility for the delivery of this Plan rests with the SCTS Board, which meets at least six times per year. Support is provided by formal Board Committees, including the People Committee, Audit and Risk Committee and the Estates, Health & Safety, Fire and Security Committee.

Performance Management

Delivery of specific actions and detailed monitoring of performance are the responsibility of the SCTS Chief Executive, supported by the SCTS Executive Team. Collaborative justice-wide initiatives will be managed, and progress will be monitored, through the Scottish Government's Justice Board.

More detailed performance outcomes for each financial year will be set out in the SCTS annual Business Plan, published at the beginning of each business year. A full report on the performance and expenditure of the organisation for each financial year is published in the form of the SCTS Annual Report and Accounts.

In addition the SCTS Board also publishes a performance scorecard and business plan delivery report annually – providing an overview of key aspects of operational performance and the delivery of the outcomes set out in our annual business plan respectively.

These documents complement this Corporate Plan, providing more information on activities and performance on an annual basis. They can be found (alongside other key corporate information) on the Reports and Data section of the SCTS website.

Risk Management

SCTS maintains a formal Risk Management Framework and the high level corporate risks are subject to regular review by the Executive Team, the Audit and Risk Committee and the SCTS Board. The responsibility for management of the individual risks is delegated to specific risk owners.



SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE

Annual Report and Accounts 2015-16

SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNALS SERVICE
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh
EH11 3XD

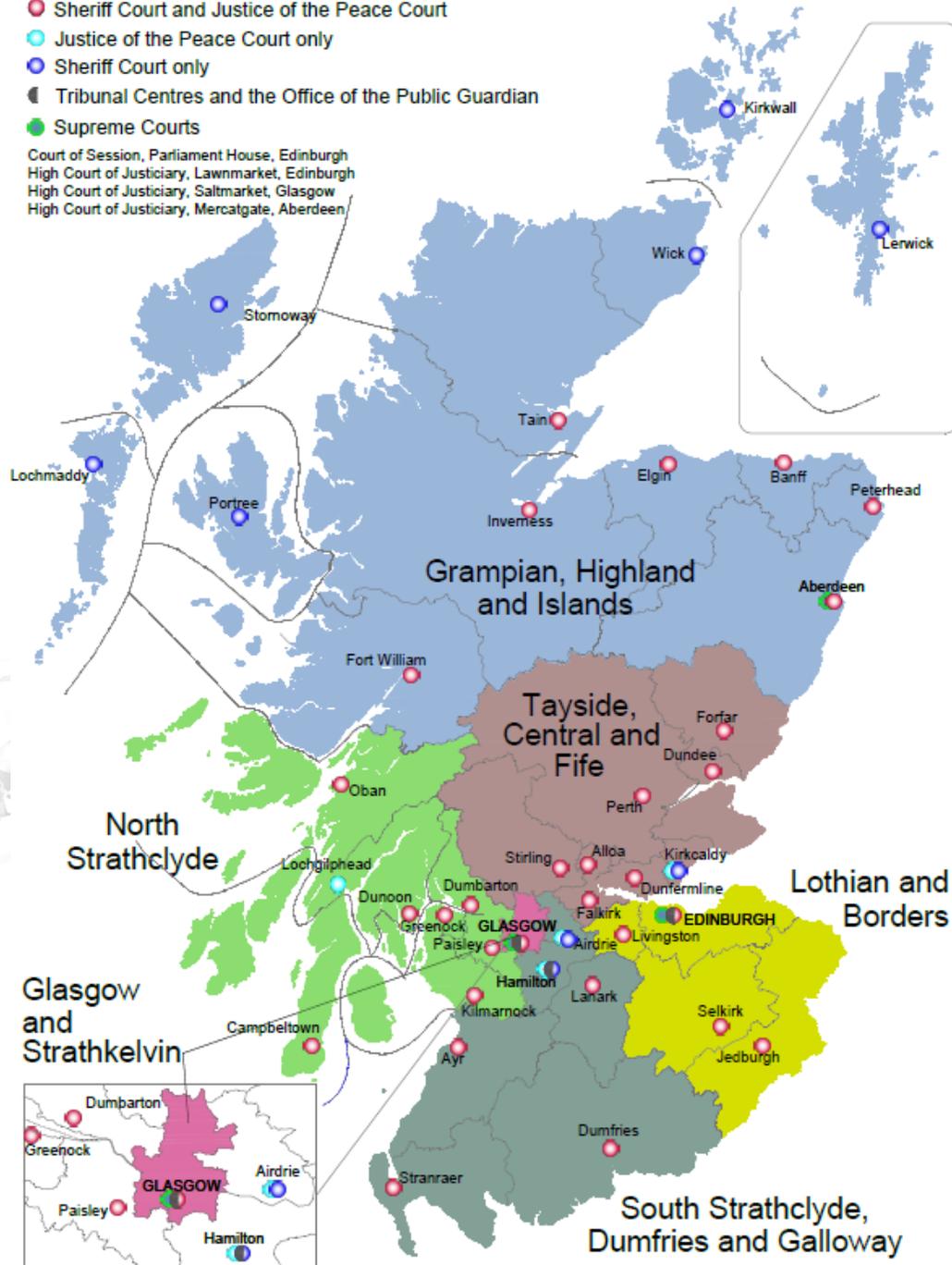


We publish a detailed report on performance and budgets every year, available [here](#)

Annex 1 - SCTS Locations Map

- Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court
- Justice of the Peace Court only
- Sheriff Court only
- Tribunal Centres and the Office of the Public Guardian
- Supreme Courts

Court of Session, Parliament House, Edinburgh
 High Court of Justiciary, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh
 High Court of Justiciary, Saltmarket, Glasgow
 High Court of Justiciary, Mercatgate, Aberdeen



SCTS website

<http://www.scotcourtribunals.gov.uk/>

SCTS Reports and Data

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/reports-data

SCTS Board

www.scotcourts.gov.uk/about-the-scottish-court-service/the-scottish-court-service-board

Office of the Public Guardian

www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk

Scottish Tribunals

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/the-tribunals/about-scottish-tribunals>

Other Courts & Tribunals

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/the-courts/the-tribunals/other-courts-and-tribunals>

Judicial Office for Scotland

<http://www.scotland-judiciary.org.uk/1/0/Home>

Scottish Government

<http://www.gov.scot/>

Scottish Civil Justice Council

www.scottishciviljusticecouncil.gov.uk

Scottish Sentencing Council

<https://www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk/>

Justice Strategy for Scotland

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Justice/justicestrategy>

If you require production of this document in another language or format please contact us at: enquiries@scotcourtribunals.gov.uk

Further Information

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